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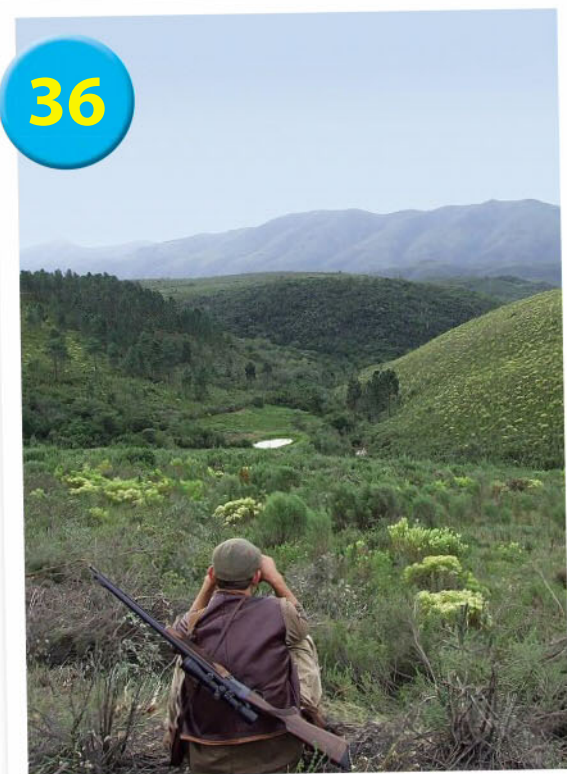
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VOLUME 40
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SEPTEMBER 2015

ON THE COVER:
A 12ga Italyco SLX boxlock with side-plates. The metal is colour case-hardened using a traditional bone-and-charcoal technique. These guns from Fausti are fully tailor-made and feature custom stock dimensions and specifications. Photo supplied by Fausti.

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The Truth about (Professional) Hunting

WHEN STILL A BOY I was once told that the truth for each individual is simply what he or she believes. At times in my life I have struggled to get to grips with this statement, hoping that there would be a sort of 'collective truth' that can be used as a guide to make life's decisions easier. The point about truth was driven home with the debacle surrounding Cecil the lion. Seeing and hearing the reactions to this incident made me realize once more that each individual has his or her own take on what they regard as the truth. Unfortunately our truths and the facts are not always the same thing.

Cecil wore a fitted GPS satellite collar as part of current research efforts being done in Hwange National Park and its surrounding areas and was well-known and regularly sighted by tourists. The allegation is that bait was used to entice the lion from the park to private land, where it was then shot.

The hunter, Dr Walter Palmer, a dentist from Minnesota in the US, was referred to on a local news channel as 'the killer dentist', words that can easily be used to unfairly describe all hunters. The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Authority has since banned all bowhunting in the country and found that the lion was illegally killed by Palmer and Theo Bronkhorst, professional hunter with Bushman Safaris. In addition, Mr Honest Trymore Ndlovu, owner of the farm where the hunt took place, had not been allocated a lion on his hunting quota for 2015. Criminal proceedings are in progress.

Of course I am shocked that this can happen in professional hunting, but I am also shocked with the way the media, especially the social media, are going about expressing the so-called truth and the open hatred displayed against Palmer, a hatred that is openly transferred to all hunters. All this is not good news for hunters and hunting. Hunting in southern Africa is under the spotlight as never before and we as hunters will take a beating. The perceptions that are now formed will remain for a long time.

Opinions are being expressed all over the world and I quote from an editorial in the *New York Times*: "The death of Cecil, the black-maned lion killed by an American big-game hunter in Zimbabwe, has unleashed a global storm of Internet indignation. The hunter... has been forced into hiding. On the face of it, the reasons are not hard to discern: In an era of dwindling wildlife, proliferation of threatened species and large-scale poaching of elephants and other beasts, big-game hunting in Africa does not hold the allure it may have had in Teddy Roosevelt's day.

"These debates will not be ended by Cecil's cruel death, but maybe something important can come of the public outrage. It should refocus attention on the many species that are in danger, particularly elephants, rhinos and other beasts being destroyed for their tusks, horns and other parts."

"The fury over Cecil's death should also prompt some soul-searching among hunters who pursue African game, a large number of whom are well-to-do Americans. In one particularly dreadful practice called 'canned' hunting, private ranches raise lions purely to trot them out to be killed by 'hunters' for trophies. Australia has banned the importation of trophies from 'canned' hunts, and Botswana for one has banned lion hunting (Zambia, however, lifted its ban on lion and leopard hunting in May). Such measures could help reduce the kills, but the survival of many species will require far more shared responsibility than nations and communities are currently willing to accept."

This influential paper has a daily circulation of 1 379 806 (September 2014) and the editorial clearly illustrates how our actions are judged by the really big opinion makers. We must realize that we live in a world bigger than the farm or concession we hunt on and that our actions can reverberate in places we sometimes cannot even imagine. It will take hard work over a long period to repair the damage that has now been done, if that is possible at all.

PHASA members have already been asked by their president, Hermann Meyerdricks, to open the debate on canned lion hunting. He is of the opinion that it is no longer tenable. He asked members to consider the current policy and decide on a new approach that is defensible in public.

At the moment PHASA must justify how it agrees with that 'particularly dreadful practice called "canned" hunting'. That is an impossible task. Where is the moral high ground? I am sad to say that this is the state of affairs in our most prestigious hunting organization.

In the past, I have been questioned about canned lion hunting by several foreign visitors and each time I have been embarrassed at giving an account of the true state of affairs. The truth is this behaviour is morally indefensible.

We have to get our act together and be the hunters and conservationists we proclaim to be. We as hunters will have to work much harder to conserve and must be seen to do this. We need a very high level of moral fibre to ensure that we can continue sport hunting. Of course it goes without saying that some laws and regulations will need amending, but surely as hunters we do not need a law to enable us do the right thing?

I also quote from a letter received from Robin Hurt, well-known professional hunter of Namibia: "When you take out the 'chance of the chase', then it is no longer hunting. The animal must have the chance to escape. Canned hunting does not offer the animal any such a 'chance'.

"I have just been watching BBC. I can't tell you what damage this "shooting" of Cecil has done to the hunting industry as a whole. It is now seen as a 'dirty' profession. In my youth it was seen as an honourable occupation for gentlemen."

Let us do whatever is necessary to ensure that in future it will be an honourable occupation once more; that we return to the kind of sport hunting whereby we can be proud of the truth. 



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Fathers & Sons

by **DIMITRI PSAROS**



Author and sons, Alec and George, with their 7³/₄ inch Rowland Ward mountain reedbuck ram.

I WAS PRIVILEGED to go on many hunting trips with my late father. I enjoyed just about every aspect of those trips including the planning, shopping, packing, the long drives through the countryside and the camping. Normally it would be just the two of us and we'd have long discussions about hunting and about life; at other times we just silently enjoyed being in each other's company. We cooked venison dishes on the campfire and enjoyed freshly brewed coffee from my dad's old coffee-pot. Wonderful memories!

NOWADAYS, my wife and children usually accompany me on my hunting trips, where we always do game drives, walks in the bush and some target shooting. As a result of our discussions and their observations during these outings, my sons George (6) and Alec (4) already have a basic understanding

of the important role that hunting plays in game management and conservation. With so much anti-hunting sentiment around I think it's important they understand this and are able to defend the sport. They have seen me shoot birds, skin animals and process meat. Consequently, unlike many of their classmates, they understand the cycle of life and know where their meat comes from.

While my sons had had relatively wide exposure to hunting, and we have been on numerous hunting trips as a family, the boys had not yet accompanied me on a hunting trip where

just the three of us stayed over on the farm. So I arranged a 3-day hunting trip on a friend's farm near Harrismith – just father and sons, as my dad had done with me.

I NORMALLY SPEND the whole day in the field, leaving camp on foot at first light, walking long distances and hunting until late in the afternoon. However, this routine was not going to work with two young children, so I planned to leave camp at around 7.30am when the temperatures had climbed a little. We would drive to the top of the mountain and take a slow walk with frequent breaks, and stop for a picnic lunch. Given the limited amount of legwork we could put in, I knew the chances of actually bagging something were low, but that didn't matter. There would be interesting things for the boys to see and the main thing was that we would be spending time together.

The boys were already kitted out with camouflage clothing, beanies, caps and boots. My mother-in-law made them gaiters so they could be just like dad, and I bought them each



Snacks & picnic lunch packed.

a pair of compact 8x21 binoculars for the trip. The excitement and happiness on their faces when they received their binoculars brought a big smile to my own face. I drew up a checklist of items and a menu for the trip and mom did the shopping. Good thing she did too, because she slipped in a number of unexpected treats that were much appreciated by the hunters.

ON A COLD Saturday morning in mid-June we kissed mommy and my daughter Gabriella goodbye and set off in the double-cab. I was more excited than ever. During the 3-hour journey we admired the winter landscape that presented itself as we crested each rise along the N3. I fielded at least a hundred questions on various topics emanating from their enquiring minds before we stopped at the Wimpy in Harrismith. There, the boys and I enjoyed a nice meal together just as I had done on many occasions with their late grandfather at this very same venue.

After a bumpy 40-minute drive, we finally arrived at the farm where the boys immediately set about exploring the old farmhouse which was our accommodation, and the surrounding area. George announced that there were hares in the vicinity and proudly showed me the droppings he had discovered. Alec was collecting sticks and throwing them into an old feeding trough. I let them play and explore and just be carefree little boys. They struck up a game of, "Let's pretend we're ..." and it melted my heart to see them interacting. I pray they will always be so close.

Later that afternoon I shot a guineafowl, and on retrieving it, George asked whether "boy" guineafowl have spurs on their legs, like spurfowl. I explained that guinea-fowl have no spurs, and I was forced to admit that I can't tell the difference in their gender unless I gut the guineafowl (males have testes in the intestinal cavity).



At last. My very own gate openers.

Next morning the boys were up at 5.45, ready to go hunting. I delayed our departure until they'd had a good breakfast, been to the toilet and were warmly dressed. I packed water, juice, snacks and sandwiches into my backpack, plus a mini first-aid kit, paracetamol, lip balm, toilet-paper, camera tripod and assorted hunting gadgets. Finally, we were ready to drive up the mountain.

buck with the aid of his binoculars, but try as he might, Alec could not see them. He was very frustrated but, to his credit, he did not complain.

Would we be able to successfully stalk the reedbuck? Were the boys up to the physical exertion? Would they be able to remain focussed or would they make a mistake that would blow the stalk? I pondered these questions as we drove to the top of the mountain, where I parked about half a kilometre from the now-invisible reedbuck.



George & Alec with guineafowl shot on the first afternoon.

As we neared the top I spotted two mountain reedbuck bedded down on a grassy plateau about 200m away. George eventually spotted the reed-

"WE MUST WALK into the wind otherwise the mountain reedbuck will smell us and run away. We must walk very slowly and quietly behind you. We must only whisper, and only if we have to. We must listen to what you say," George announced, just as I was about to deliver the same pep-talk. "Yes, and if they see us they will also run away," added Alec.

My chest swelled with pride. My sons had just briefed *me* on what was required! They looked so cute in their camos, and their eager little faces had me swallowing hard.

We walked slowly along the top of the mountain until I spotted the ewe bedded down and the ram grazing not far from her. We backtracked until we were out of sight of the reedbuck and then started making our way down the slope. The boys were coping well but needed help climbing down the



We were surprised when these beautiful horses responded to my predator call.

In a repeat of the exercise a little later on, Alec wanted to know how long until Christmas!

I now ranged the reedback at 156m but I wanted to get closer. I wanted the boys to understand from the start that hunting involved the use of skills to stalk as closely as possible to the animal. Besides, we were enjoying ourselves so much I didn't want the stalk to end.

We made good progress until we ran out of cover. I told the boys that the reedback were not too far ahead and I could see the excitement intensify on their faces. Fifty metres ahead was a small patch of bush and the reedback were somewhere beyond that. Keeping the patch of bush between us and the quarry we slowly and quietly stalked through the short grass. George could hardly contain himself and veered slightly left to try to spot the reedback but dropped back behind me when he saw my frown. We reached the patch of bush and took a short break; then I crawled forward.

THROUGH THE BUSHES I could see the reedback ewe only 60 metres away, still bedded down and totally unaware of our presence. The ram was not visible.

The 100gr bullet from my .243 broke her neck and she died instantly. The ram emerged from behind a bush and he too, fell to a neck shot. I looked back at the boys and gave them the thumbs-up.

"Did you get one? Where is it? Can we go and look please? Why did you shoot twice? Did you shoot the ram or the ewe? Are you proud of us for walking so far and keeping quiet?" All these questions came at once.

The boys stroked the reedback's hide and horns and continued to ask me questions. George explained that there were three ways he could identify the ram. "It is bigger than the ewe, it has horns and it has a penis while the female has an udder". As we sat admiring these beautiful animals I said a short prayer.

I had to answer many more questions while gutting the carcasses. Suddenly, George pointed to the sky and said, "Look!" About a dozen vultures soared past us, followed by five or six crows looking almost close enough to touch. What a wonderful sight! In over 20 years of hunting on that farm, this was the first time I had seen live vultures (I once found a dead one) and I was thrilled that my boys could share the experience.

Later that day, I skinned the reedback, answering yet more questions. I didn't mind – clearly the boys were eager to learn. That evening we enjoyed fresh reedback liver in gravy on steaming spaghetti. After our delicious meal, the boys dipped biscuits in rooibos tea and honey while I enjoyed a cup of coffee brewed in my father's old coffee-pot.

I feel privileged to have shared this hunting experience with my sons and I'm very proud of the way they conducted themselves in every respect. Every moment of the trip was special to me and I recommend such trips for all fathers and sons. 

steeper rocky areas. We took a little break and when I asked them whether they were tired they shook their heads vigorously. When I asked if we should continue the stalk they nodded and smiled.

We continued our descent of the slope, using the *outhout* trees and small ridges to screen our approach. On a number of occasions we had to crawl or shuffle forward on our bottoms to remain screened. The boys mimicked my movements and I smiled to encourage them, but also because I couldn't help it, I was so happy. Hearing Alec softly call to me, I put my ear close to his mouth. "Are there any elephants on this farm?" he asked. I had to stop myself from laughing out loud.

	
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Galana Interlude

I was pleasantly surprised to read the article "Galana Interlude", by Neville Steyn, in the November 2014 issue of *Magnum*. In 1963 my father, Robby Myburgh, my brother Robert, and my father's German hunting friend, Heinz Becker, were finishing off a 4 month Tanganyika safari in the Lake Rukwa area where they met up with Neville who was busy catching topi. My father took a cine film of Neville's game catching operation, which I still have.

The film includes an action scene where a young topi is caught and loaded onto a truck and a scene of a topi calf being released from a poacher's snare, as well as a few scenes of Neville's camp. – *Ian Myburgh, Gauteng*

Reloading Pressure

The photograph of a bench in "Load Your Own – Part 1" in the June 2015 *Magnum*, displays a very neat reloading area. However, I strongly feel that primers should not be stored above the reloading bench.

Should one of them wiggle their way out of the box, roll off the shelf and fall into a case waiting to be charged...?

Most of us are loading fairly close to maximum loads and I don't think the added pressure of an exploding primer would be a good thing.

Great magazine guys, keep it up.
– *Dylan Marriner, Gauteng*

7x57 Mauser

My *Magnum* is one of my monthly pleasures, and I enjoy reading most articles. *Magnum* is unique in respect of its appeal and mix of topics covered. As a cartridge handloader, however, I'm concerned by some of what I read in the June 2015 article on the 7x57 Mauser by Tim Crites.

I guess there might be some propellants from Finland such as VIHTAVUORI that can safely get a 175 grain Hornady 7mm bullet up to 2600fps in a 7x57 load, but I'm sure

some local reader trying to achieve that velocity with our local RHEIN-METALL SOMCHEM powders is going to damage his gun and probably get hurt.

The average maximum velocity for 170gr bullets in 7x57 using published SOMCHEM load data for S365, S355 and S335 is 2446fps. To put this in perspective, using SOMCHEM data, 2600fps for a 170gr bullet is upper end 7x64 Brenneke or lower end 7mm Remington Magnum territory.

I like the 7x57 calibre. I've seen moderate velocity PMP factory 170 grain ammunition put large eland and blue wildebeest down with a side-on heart-lung shot, both down within a few metres after receiving the shot. Like most 7mm or .30 calibre projectiles in this weight class, it does a good job on a wide variety of game with well-placed shots at velocities around 2300 to 2400fps. It has low recoil and solid performance.

So if you own a rifle in this delightful calibre, don't bother trying to milk the maximum velocities. If it's speed and more recoil you want from a 7mm, get a 7x64 Brenneke or a 7mm Remington Magnum. – *Paul Botha, Gauteng*

► We concur with your remarks on 7x57 velocities when using Somchem powders. Reloading should adhere to Rheinmetall-Somchem published velocities. – Editor

7x57 Mauser II

I have to salute Tim Crites on his article on the 7mm Mauser in the June 2015 edition.

I am a forest manager and hunter in southern Germany. When I got my first hunting license back in 1998, I inherited a 7x57 from my late grandfather, also a forester. He was hunting almost daily with this rifle and never had the need to 'upgrade' to the .308 or .30-06 class calibres.

Back then, I did feel the urge to hunt roe deer, red deer and wild boar with a more 'appropriate' .30-06, as was the flavour of the time in Germany.

The 7mm Mauser was considered to be a bit on the weak side. Then I got an old drilling in 7x57R, loaded to a lower spec than the rimless version. Over time I gained experience and got rid of the .30-06 and hunted happily with these "stone age" cartridges, using standard S&B soft point bullets since PMP ammunition is no longer available here. I am more than happy with the performance and cannot recommend the 7mm Mauser highly enough. When I read the size and weight of animals Tim and others are taking in Africa and across the world, I really do not see where the opinion of "too weak a calibre for wild boar" ever came from. However, this erroneous notion resulted in the fact that today you can hardly find a rifle manufacturer that produces rifles for the 7mm Mauser in Germany. Luckily the old and traditional gun maker HEYM still makes rifles in this fine calibre, and even offers it in their very affordable SR 21 Allround. If I only had space in my gun safes... Long live the 7x57!

– *A Held, Germany*

Buying Second Hand

A big thank you for a superb read every month.

In today's economic times a lot of people tend to buy second-hand firearms which can turn out to be a costly exercise. I recently got a second-hand .308 Mauser, fitted with a Lynx scope. The salesman made no mention of any possible defects.

I have spent money on ammunition, gunsmith fees, buying a laser bore-sight, rifle bag, sling and another scope. I had the rifle bore-sighted and checked at a very reputable gun shop. Yet after four visits to my local shooting range I still cannot get bullets on target at 25m.

I strongly urge prospective buyers to have their weapons of choice thoroughly checked out by a reputable gunsmith before handing over their hard-earned cash.

– *Mike de Vries, Western Cape* 

Mumiani

by **TERRY IRWIN**

illustration **ALAN WALKER**



AFRICA HOLDS MANY tribal beliefs, some so strange they can be hard to accept as the truth. One such example is *mumiani*.

The Standard Swahili-English Dictionary has this to say about *mumiani*: "A dark-coloured gum-like substance used by some Arabs, Indians, and Swahili as a medicine for cramps, ague, broken bones, etc. It is used as an

outward application, also when melted in ghee for drinking as a medicine. It is said to be brought from Persia, but many natives firmly believe that it is dried or coagulated human blood taken from victims murdered for the purpose, and when a rumour is started that *mumiani* is being sought for, the natives in a town are filled with terror and seldom go out of their houses after sunset."

Mumiani is reddish-brown in colour and when using it a person could appear to have a mouthful of blood. Also, when used orally, it seems to cause frequent spitting, and the spittle could be likened to blood spatter. A person indulging in *mumiani* is an unusual sight and this could easily convince an uninformed native that the person is using a blood derivative.

Apparently the notion that *mumiani* was made from human blood originated during the era of slave trading when some natives believed that the slaves, after arriving at the coast, were taken away to be bled to death for this purpose.

I had planned to go to East Africa when I had finished my studies but when I heard that the Anglo-American Corporation was recruiting young men to go to Tanganyika Territory (now Tanzania) to prospect for diamonds I jumped at the opportunity. My professor at university agreed that I could return to my studies after a year. This never happened as I later joined the Tanganyika Game Department.

When I was interviewed for the post of prospector I was warned about all the bad things in East Africa. I was told to be prepared to live in a tent and undertake long foot safaris to reach sampling sites. My interviewer warned about wild animals and said that lions preying on humans were an almost daily occurrence. He continued warning about tsetse flies, malaria and other

tropical diseases, but none of these deterred me and I accepted the job.

I was flown to Nairobi with the next batch of recruits and from there to Mwadui mine, the headquarters of Williamson's Diamonds and the prospecting operation. After a few days briefing, during which we were taught how to pan a sample and read aerial photos, I was issued with a Land Rover and camping equipment and sent to a field camp. There were camps all over the country, usually with a geologist in charge of three or four prospectors. I was sent to a camp in the Serengeti to prospect the Serengeti National Park. I could not have had a better introduction to the wildlife of Tanganyika.

After a few months I was transferred to Nachingwea in the Southern Province, and from there to a camp in the village of Liwale near the Southern boundary of the Selous Game Reserve. From this camp I undertook foot safaris into the Selous to gather samples along the numerous sand rivers.

While at the Liwale camp, I learned about *mumiani* and the strong belief among the locals as to where it came from. Neither I nor the three others I shared the camp with had heard of it.

We were in daily radio contact with headquarters and one day we received the shocking news that one of our

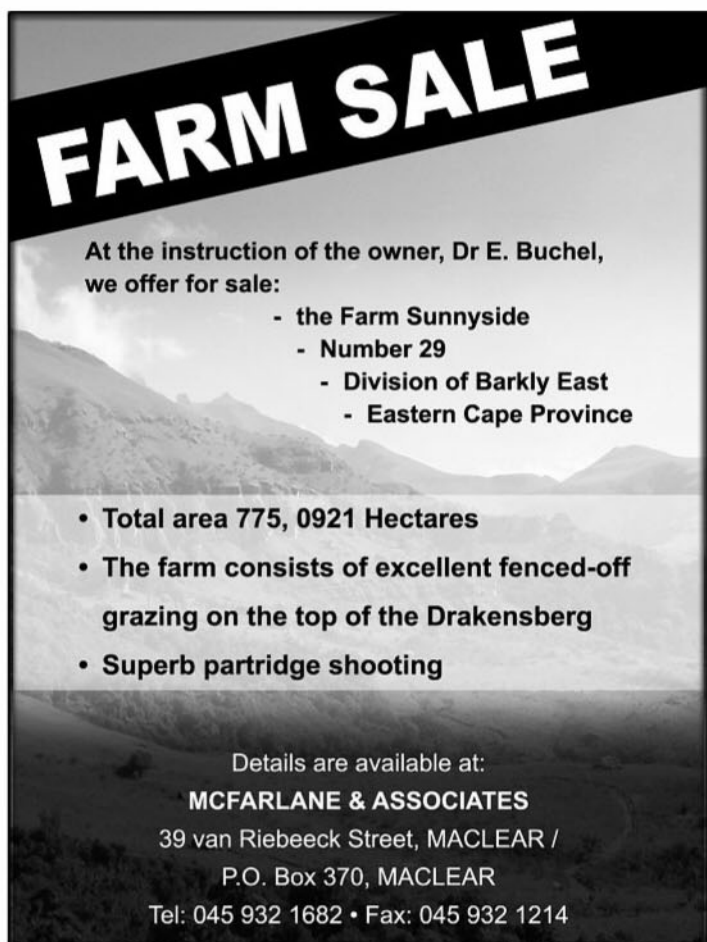
***One day we received
shocking news – one
of our prospectors had
been murdered***

prospectors had been murdered by the Wagogo, a tribe in Central Province. The murdered prospector was the son of one of the Anglo-American directors. Evidently it was a *mumiani* murder that would not have happened if the villages concerned had been informed beforehand of the prospecting activities. All

camps were now ordered to report to the local chief and explain what we were doing.

The murdered prospector had been camped near a remote village and each day he and his men had to walk through the village on their way to and from the sampling site. He had about a dozen porters with him, each carrying a black bag which was filled with gravel. When all the bags had been filled they would transport it back to camp to be panned into a concentrate which was then submitted as the sample. The porters carried these black bags back to camp on their heads, leaving the villagers to speculate as to the contents. A rumour soon started that it could be human heads and that the prospector and his team were *mumiani* seekers.

On the second day of sampling, while returning through the village, one of the porters pointed to his load and jokingly informed the bewildered onlookers that their heads would be next. This confirmed the villagers' suspicions.



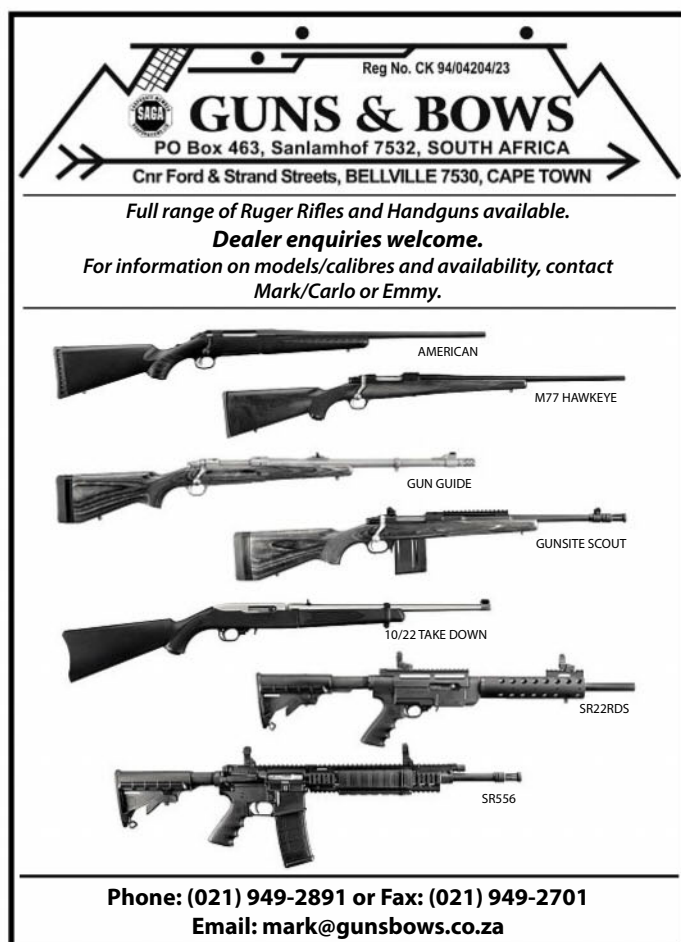
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The next morning, on entering the village they were confronted by a group of spear-wielding locals. The prospector's men immediately fled, leaving him to face the angry mob. He was new to the country and had not yet learnt to speak Swahili. His anguished attempts to explain what they were doing only convinced the villagers of his guilt, so they speared him to death.

HAD THE PROSPECTORS explained to the chief beforehand what they were doing, and possibly recruited one or two helpers from the village, this tragedy would never have happened.

After this I learnt from some of the local Indian traders that they were very aware of the suspicion surrounding *mumiani*, and many refused to use it or even have it in their homes. Some had stories of murders that had been instigated by this suspicion. None seemed to know the origin or source of *mumiani*, or what it consisted of, but all said it was quite widely available locally. They knew it simply as one of the old medicines.

Years later, when I was a game ranger, I had to flee a village when I was suspected of seeking *mumiani*. I was doing elephant control in a remote area of south-eastern Mahenge district near the Selous Reserve boundary. Elephant were coming out of the Reserve at night and raiding crops. I was camped just outside the village and the locals knew that I was there to protect their crops.

I had shot three elephant which had the desired effect of driving the herds back into the reserve and the raids on the *shambas* ceased. I decided to stay a few days to make sure the elephant did not return and use this break to hunt a leopard, for which I had a licence.

I had seen the tracks of a large leopard on a footpath through a dense gallery forest near the village. Although the locals used this path to get to another hamlet on the far side of the forest, their occasional use of the path did not appear to disturb the leopard. I shot a reedbuck and hung it for bait on a horizontal branch con-

veniently situated over the path. I then built a hide of leafy branches some twenty paces away.

ON THE SECOND night the leopard fed on the bait, so I decided to wait for it from early evening. After waiting about two hours I heard voices, then two women appeared, walking along the path from the direction of the village. They stopped when they saw the bait and with much pointing and exclaiming they discussed the possibility of taking some meat. Eager for them to move on I left the hide and approached them to explain what I was doing and ask them to go. On seeing me they let out a scream and hurried back along the path by which they had come.

I returned to the hide but the leopard

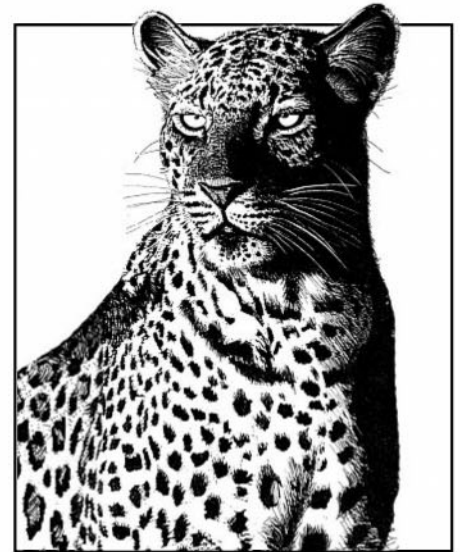
*The people were
convinced I was
there seeking
mumiani*

ard did not show. On my return to camp I had to pass through the village. I noticed some unusual stares from the villagers and my greetings did not receive the usual friendly response, but I thought nothing of it.

The next afternoon I again went to the hide early. The leopard had fed on the bait during the night and I was sure if undisturbed he would show. I had just settled in when my out-of-breath headman came running up to the hide.

"Come Bwana, we must leave this village immediately!" he exclaimed. "They are going to kill us!"

He then went on to explain that the people were convinced I was there seeking *mumiani*. One of our men was present at a discussion in the village when he heard them say that my elephant hunting was only a ruse and that I was in fact trying to trap women in the forest. Why was I still in their village after having rid them of the elephants? They



were convinced that I had placed the reedbuck across the path to entice them and was lying in wait nearby to kill them.

He also told me that he had ordered our men to pack up camp and head back towards Mahenge. When they were well away from the village they were to wait for us. We would take a route that led past the village and join them some distance further on. It was believed that the villagers were awaiting my return from the hide to attack us.

AFTER SKIRTING the village, we followed the path my men had taken and caught up with them about two hours later. We put as much distance between us and the village as we could before nightfall, then camped for the night. Although I was confident that we were far enough from the village I posted guards just in case we were followed. The next morning we left early and did not stop until we reached Mahenge.

It is surprising that such a belief, which had originated more than a century ago during the era of slave trading, would still persist to this day. However, many of the more remote villages we visited were blissfully uninformed of changing times or events taking place elsewhere. This was before transistor radios, and all information was by word of mouth. I have visited some villages where I was the first white man they had seen. I was often subjected to having the skin on my arms being stroked and my hair felt by curious individuals. ■

Koos se Koedoebul

by HERMAN DE WET



Photo by Philip Huebsch.

EK WEET instinktief die voertuig met helder ligte wat in my rigting beweeg is Koos. Die bakkie vorder tot by my waar ek onder 'n wildevyeboom vir hulle wag. Na die gebruikelike groet klim Koos by my in die voertuig en ons vat die laaste stukkie grondpad aan na die plaas toe. Die hele pad gesels ons oor die jag wat voorlê en veral oor die groot koedoe-bulle op die plaas. Ons pak af by die kamp en ry onmiddellik na die skietbaan om die gewere te toets. Koos jag net met sy .375 Sako en sy groepering vir die oggend is goed. Na die skietbaansessie besluit ons om 'n draai deur die veld te ry, al is dit reeds redelik laat in die oggend.

ONS SIEN HEELWAT groepies rooibokke maar dit is meestal ramme met ooie. Ons het 'n jag reël om nooit 'n ram te skiet wat saam met ooie beweeg nie. Vlakvarke lyk ook volop te wees soos ons vorder. Terwyl ons verby 'n troppie rooibokramme ry besluit Koos om een vir 'n vriend te skiet. Ons ry verby die ramme en stop sowat 200m verder onder 'n boom. Ons klim uit en maak reg om die troppie te bekruip. Die luggie trek verkeerd en om onderkant die wind in te kom moet ons met 'n ompad deur die digte bosse.

Ons het omtrent 100m deur die bos gevorder toe ons hoor hoe takke naby ons breek. 'n Groot koedoebul verskyn skielik en hardloop skuins voor ons verby. Sy massiewe horings lê breed oor sy rug en voordat ons tot verhaal kan kom, is hy weg. Die bos is skielik doodstil. Ek en Koos kyk vir mekaar

sonder om iets te sê. Ek is seker ons albei het besef koedoebulle van dié grootte bied nie elke dag so 'n geleentheid nie. Op daardie oomblik het ek skuldig gevoel dat ek nie die bul in die digte bos sien staan het nie. Koos het stadig vorentoe geloop tot waar die bul in die digte bosse verdwyn het en ek het stil by hom gaan staan. Dit sou 'n mors van tyd wees om 'n bul wat so groot geskrik het te probeer volg.

Die jag op die rooibokke het ook summier net daar geëindig. Ek was seker dat die geraas van die vluggende koedoe hulle ook sou laat spaander het. Die prentjie van die bul wou maar net nie uit my gedagtes gaan nie. Die paar sekondes wat hy sigbaar was bly in my geestesoor afspeel terwyl ons stadig terug stap na die bakkie toe. Hy het massiewe horings. Hoewel die horingspunte nie weer na buite uitgedraai het nie, was die draaie baie diep en ek was seker dat hulle meer as 55 duim sou meet. Ek was ook bewus dat dit die minimum grootte vir 'n trofee was wat Koos graag vir sy trofeekamer wou hê. Koos het al baie koedoes gejag, maar nooit met 'n maatband in sy sak nie. Die omgewing waar ons nou jag, was bekend vir

sy groot koedoebulle. Voor ons op die jag gekom het, het ons oor die feit gesels en besluit dat 55 duim die minimum lengte vir 'n trofee koedoebul sou wees.

**Regs: Koos met sy koedoe bul.
Onder: Marisca met die blou wildebees.**



Marisca besluit om teen die koppie af te kruip om te sien of ons nie 'n skoot op een van die blou wildebeeste kan kry nie. Ons poging is suksesvol en sy mik op 'n mooi groot koei wat sowat 60 tree weg staan. Toe die skoot klap, val die koei in haar spore. So paar minute later is die res van

Terwyl ons met 'n tweespoorpaadjie al langs die berg op ry in die rigting van die kamp hoor ek ons medejagter, Marisca, saggies op die bakkie

Die prentjie van die bul wou maar net nie uit my gedagtes gaan nie

se dak tik. Sy wys ons 'n klompie blou wildebeeste. Ek kon sien Koos het sy lus om te jag tydelik verloor. Ek en

die jaggeselskap by ons en na 'n paar foto's word die wildebees opgelaa en ons ry terug kamp toe.



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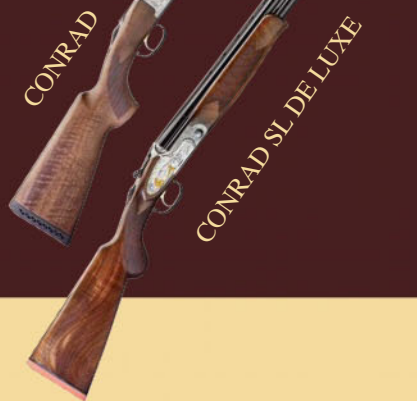
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LAAT MIDDAG is ons weer veld toe met die hoop om 'n koedoebul raak te loop. Die keer het ons teen die oostekant van 'n bergreeks wat deur die jaggebied strek gejag. Ek het al in die verlede mooi koedoebulle in die gebied gesien, maar ten spyte van al ons pogings kom ons die aand met leë hande terug in die kamp.

Die volgende dag word ek en Koos vroegoggend aan die westekant van die plaas afgelaai. Die plan is om al met die berg langs te jag tot by 'n plek waar 'n ou windpomp staan. 'n Voertuig sou ons so teen elf-uur daar kry. Ons stop kort-kort by oop plekke in die bos en dan fynkam ons die gebied berg af met die verkykers. Wild is volop en ons sien troppies rooibokke, koedoekoeie en groot troppe blou wildebeeste. Van groot koedoebulle is daar egter geen teken nie.

ONS HET AL ver gevorder en was effens moedeloos toe ons besluit om op 'n groot rotsplaat 'n bietjie te rus. Koos sit sy geweer agter hom teen 'n paar groot klippe neer en gaan sit op een van die plat rotse met sy bene wat oor die kant hang. Ek haal vir ons water uit my rugsak en gaan sit langs hom. Sonder om 'n woord te sê, sit ons lank so en uitkyk op die berghange. Skielik sien ek 'n beweging 200m weg aan my regterkant tussen 'n klompie doringbome. Ek beduie vir Koos en vir die volgende paar minute word daar dringend gesoek na enige beweging deur die verkykers.

Nie lank nie en 'n mooi koedoebul maak sy verskyning naby die doringbome. Dis 'n mooi bul maar sy horings is nie lank genoeg nie. Daar is nog 'n jonger bul saam met hom in die doringbos. Koos en ek hou die twee bulle dop soos hulle verder weg wei en later verdwyn. Die bosse onder die klipplaat bly doodstil en leeg.

EK WAS BESIG om 'n lemoen te skil nadat ek effens terug beweeg het van die klipplaat se rand af toe Koos skielik omdraai op sy maag en haastig na sy geweer kruip. Ek kruip tot langs hom en loer oor die rotse, maar sien niks nie. Ek kyk vir Koos en beduie, 'Waar?'

Hy leun oor en fluister dat hy 'n groot koedoebul reg onder ons teen die berg se rand gesien het. Ek leun verder oor en dan sien ek die agterlyf van 'n koedoe tussen die digte bosse. Koos sit reg met sy .375 en wag. Dis eers toe die bul deur 'n opening beweeg dat ons sien sy horings is beslis meer as 55 duim, maar die bul bied nie 'n kans vir 'n skoot nie. Ek beduie vir Koos ons moet net geduldig wees, want in die rigting waarin die bul beweeg, maak die bosse op plekke mooi oop.

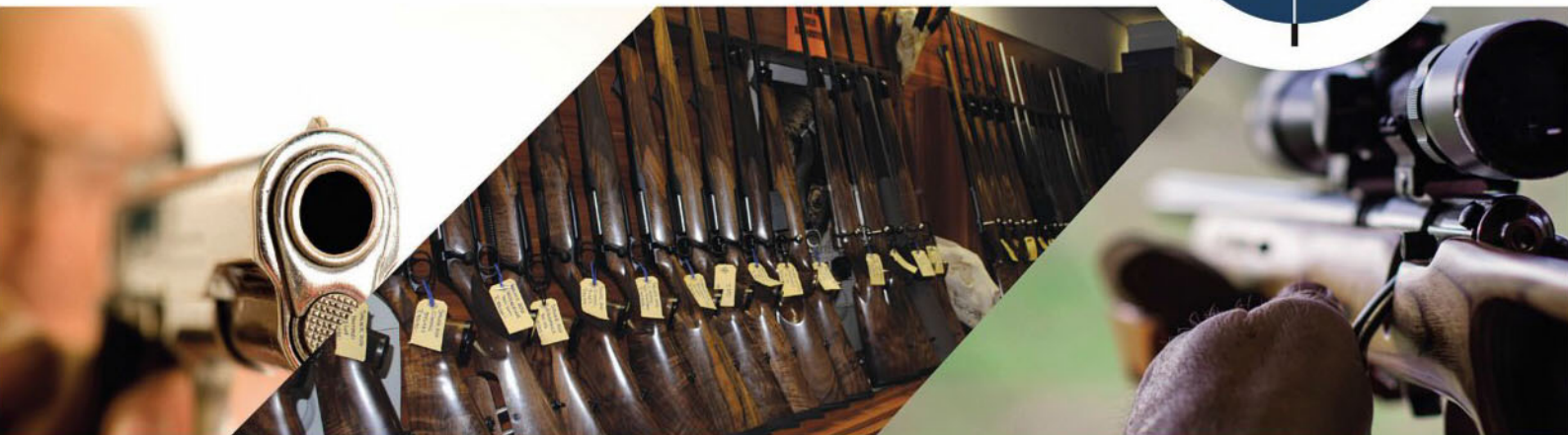
Die ou groot bul steek in sy spore vas en kyk in ons rigting

Ek het intussen my jagbaadjie uitgetrek waarop die geweer kan rus. Nou moet alles net saamwerk, dink ek by myself. Koos was gemaklik met sy skietposisie en toe die bul in die eerste oopte inbeweeg kap ek saggies twee klippe teen mekaar. Die ou groot bul steek in sy spore vas en kyk in ons rigting, maar dis te laat. Die .375 blaf en ek sien die stof net agter sy naaste blad uitslaan. Skielik is alles verby, so asof dit nooit gebeur het nie. Ek kyk vir my ou jagmaat en kan sien dat hy baie bly is.

SAAM KLIM ONS die rotse af tot by die koedoe. Koos sit sy geweer neer, haal sy hoed af en gaan kniel langs die ou bul. Ek besluit om my skaars te hou en beduie vir Koos ek gaan die bakkie haal en verdwyn tussen die bosse berg af. Later by die slagkamer wou Koos nie die horings meet nie. Volgens hom was dit 'n baie mooi bul en hy was te vrede met die trofee. Die horings se draaie was diep en ek was seker dat hulle oor die 55 duim sou meet. My eie nuuskierigheid het later die oorhand gekry en ek het die horings gemeet. Dit was net oor die 58 duim. 

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Hand-loading Series Part 4

Preparing the Cases

by **GREGOR WOODS**



Case preparation can involve ten or more separate steps. The result of each is not obvious at a glance. Inverting each case/row as you proceed obviates missing a row.

STEP ONE IS TO inspect the necks and walls of your cases for fine longitudinal cracks. This won't apply to brand new (never-fired) cases. Cracks can close up again, becoming nigh invisible; look for a grey-black stain (like a water-mark) where gas has leaked out. Discard cracked cases.

Check for a faintly highlighted ring around the case body about a centimetre from the rim. This indicates stress (metal fatigue) due to over-worked brass – usually the result of an oversized chamber or excessive headspace. A section of this ring may already show slight gas-leakage

stains, indicating a crack. Stress rings are slightly 'feathery' and uneven. (A perfectly straight, uniform ring can be ignored – it is merely a scratch caused when the bolt rotates the case in a chamber.) Discard cases with stress rings, as these will rupture when next fired, and the escaping burning gas can endanger your eyes and damage the chamber walls. Complete head-separation can occur on firing; the bolt ejects the case head only, the case body remaining in the chamber. If you fail to notice, and ram in another cartridge, the resulting jam could cost you an animal or get you killed.

Ignore very slight dents to the case mouths – the sizer die's expander plug will iron them out. Remove more serious dents by inserting an appropriately tapered object (a stainless-steel ball-point pen serves). Minor dents in the shoulders or walls of rifle cases are not serious provided you are full-length resizing (if neck-sized only, the dented cartridge may not fit in the rifle chamber). In theory a dent in the case may affect pressures, hence accuracy, so use these for rough sighters.

It isn't necessary to clean your cases unless coated with mud, blood or grime. Discard seriously corroded cases. The best case-cleaner is soap-powder or dish-washing liquid dissolved in hot water. Soak overnight, rinse and allow the interiors to completely dry. Shun chemical case cleaning agents – many cause brass to become brittle. Electric case tumblers work, but are expensive and unnecessary.

NOW STAND THE cases in the loading block/tray. Cases undergo several steps during reloading, and since the changes wrought by each step are not all obvious at a glance, it is easy to miss a case or a row of cases. Avoid this by inverting the cases in the tray after each step – necks up for one stage, necks down for the next.

Now: the dies. If what follows seems complex and arduous, relax: these instructions are for the initial *setting* of the dies; once they are set, you simply screw them in and out of the press

for each reloading session. The place to read this is at your reloading bench as you physically carry out each step.

Resizing dies for handgun cartridges are usually marked 'Sizer'. Those for rifle cartridges may simply be marked 'FL' (Full Length). Most sizer dies can be easily identified by the protruding decapping pin. The standard two-die set for bottleneck rifle cartridges comes with a full-length resizing die. If you have bought a neck-sizer die set, it will have a third die which sizes the case neck only; these dies will be marked 'FL', 'Neck' and 'Seat' respectively.

Most handgun cartridge die sets (and those for some straight-walled rifle cartridges) contain three dies: sizer, expander and bullet seater. The expander is to 'bell' (slightly flare out) the case mouth to receive all-lead bullets (copper-jacketed bullets don't require belled case-mouths). The bullet seater die sizes the belled mouth down again.

STRAIGHT-WALLED semi-auto pistol cases such as 9mmP and .45ACP are not parallel-sided but very slightly tapered. For these, an optional fourth die is available separately, called a taper-crimp for use *after* seating the bullet. This puts a slight general taper onto the loaded round to facilitate reliable feeding and to grip the bullet more tightly.

This is not the same as a roll crimp, which curls the case mouth into a groove in the bullet of revolver cartridges and heavy-recoiling rifle cartridges. *Never* roll-crimp a semi-auto pistol cartridge (even if using bullets with a crimping groove) because straight-walled

Rimless cases also suffer metal fatigue; note the 'tide-mark' stain from gas leakage.



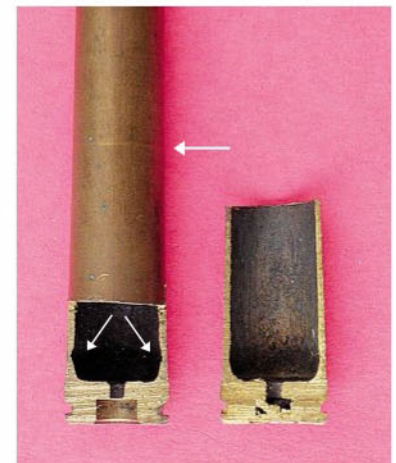
Case inspection: (1) A healthy, fired .303 case. (2) First sign of metal fatigue: a faint but bright, irregular, 'feathery' line or ring forms around the case body about 1cm from the rim – discard the case (and batch) immediately. (3) If case No '2' is resized and fired again, a crack and some gas leakage will result. (4) More serious cracks release a concentrated jet of flame which burns ring-pitting in the chamber wall like a cutting torch. (5) Complete head-separation; the escaping gas endangers the shooter's eyes.

pistol cartridges head-space on the case mouth (more about that later). Taper-crimping affords maximum reliability in feeding.

NOW, WITH *all* sizer dies, look for a tiny vent hole in the main body of the die, usually in the thread, near the top. It may be hidden under the locking ring (a flat nut) – turn the nut until the hole appears. This vent allows trapped air to escape during sizing. In new dies, this vent is often blocked with polishing compound – use a sewing pin to clear it, and ensure that no deposits remain on the *interior* die walls.

Next, attach your shell-holder (with its entrance slot facing left if you are right handed) to the ram. Raise the ram/shell-holder as high as it can go. Make sure the sizer die's locking ring is loose and positioned high up on its thread, then screw the die into the press until the bottom of the die makes contact with the shell holder. Then screw the die's locking ring down until it is almost but not quite touching the top of the press. Do NOT tighten its locking screw. Now lower the ram, then

screw the die just an eighth to a quarter of a *turn* (no more) further down, to ensure that the die and shell holder are in positive contact even when there is a



Belted cases are far from immune to head-separation. Arrows point to the thinned walls at the weakened area (the missing brass has 'flowed' forward, to be trimmed off the case mouth). Note the faint ring (arrowed) halfway up the case body; it is straight, clean and uniform, hence is not the result of metal fatigue, but a scratch formed when the rotating bolt turned the case within the chamber. The sectioned case-head (right) shows a healthy, fired case.



Minor dings to the case mouths (see two upper cases) can be ignored. The lower case mouth should be gently re-formed using an appropriately tapered object.

case in the die. This ensures full-length resizing of the case.

Handgunners, note: the above-mentioned procedure does *not* apply if you are using a tungsten-carbide sizer die, as the pressure can shatter these brittle dies. Tungsten carbide dies are marked 'CARB' or 'TC' and must be raised a quarter-turn after touching the



Very slight dents to the case walls or shoulders can be ignored if full-length resized (always test-chamber reloaded rounds prior to hunting). Author chose to discard both these cases.

Below left: Discard badly corroded cases.

Below right: Many chemical case-cleaning agents turn brass brittle, resulting in longitudinal cracks in the case neck and body after a single firing.



You have now set the die/ring combination: hereafter when you screw the die into the press until its locking ring brings it to a halt, the bottom of the die will be back in its correct position relative to the shell-holder, correctly set for full-length resizing. If you raise the ram with its empty shell holder to its limit, you should feel slight resistance at the end of the stroke, followed by a gentle 'glick' as the shell holder closes against the die. As long as you don't alter the setting of the locking ring, you need never go through this procedure again – just screw the die into the press and size away. However, if you switch presses, you must reset the die.

Finally, ensure that the decapping unit is correctly positioned within the die (it screws up or down from the top, and has its own little locking nut). If too high, the pin won't knock the spent

elevated shell holder, so as to leave a slight gap between the two. (Handgun cases don't need full-length resizing – as long as the walls are sized enough to firmly grip the bullet, the lower section is not important.)

Now, with your left hand, carefully grip the die and the top of the press together (i.e. having screwed the die to its correct height, you must hold it in that precise position *in relation to the press*). With the other hand, screw the die's locking ring down to firmly touch the top of the press, but *don't tighten its locking screw* or you will lock the die to the press and be unable to remove it without unlocking the screw (which will entail repeating the entire process next time you reload).

Next, alter the grip of your left hand to include the locking ring (i.e. you must now ensure that the locking ring's

Left: Full-length sizer-die for bottle-necked rifle case. Note the tiny air-vent (arrowed) in the thread of the die body above the locking ring. This vent is often blocked – clear it with a sewing pin. Note the expander-plug/de-capping-pin shaft running through the inside of the die body; it has its own locking rings on its upper threaded shaft.

position remains unchanged *relative to the die*). Then turn the die and its locking ring *together*, just a half turn (i.e. raise them). Keeping them held firmly together, use the other hand to tighten the locking screw, thus locking the locking ring onto the die. (Raising them a fraction is to prevent locking them both to the press when tightening the locking screw.)

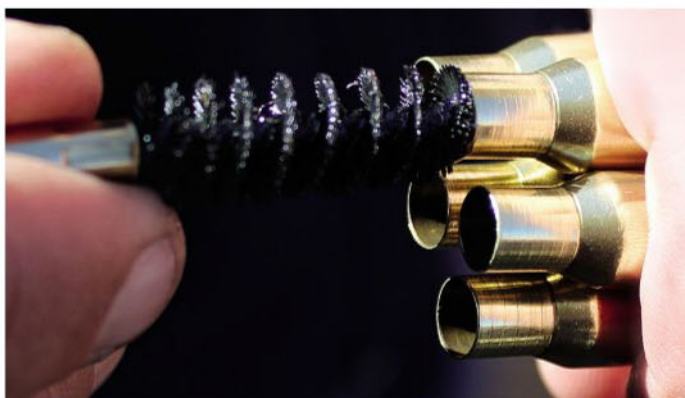




Above: Five cases on the absorbent-rubber lubrication pad. Roll back and forth once or twice to lubricate the walls. Finger-lube the necks and shoulders. The brush is for lubing the inside of the necks.

Right: Lubing the neck interiors. Don't overdo the oil – it will permeate the gunpowder.

Lightly lubricate the insides of the case-necks with a dedicated 'bottle-brush' or with an ear-bud. Do not dip the brush in oil; simply wipe the end of it on the pad surface (twirl it). Insert it the length of the case-neck only; do NOT push it all the way to the web – oil is the *last* thing you want anywhere near the primer area. Do not miss a case, or it will stick in the die.



primer out; if too low, the decapping pin holder will contact the web of the case, halting the ram before full-length resizing has taken place. The bottom of the decapping pin holder should be about 5mm above the bottom of the die.

Case lubricating is a pain, so I suggest handgunners use a tungsten-carbide sizer die which eliminates this step. Standard die sets for handgun calibres, and all die sets for rifle cartridges require lubricated cases.

USE YOUR fingers to apply a *light* coating of case-lube to the entire surface of the lube-pad. The watchword is "too little rather than too much". A common beginner's mistake is to over-lubricate the cases, which results in dents (sometimes irreparable) in the case shoulder. The excess oil has nowhere to go inside the die, and the pressure build-up caves the shoulders in. A correctly lubricated case should *not* be oily; it should merely have a slightly waxy feel to it.

Place five cases onto the pad surface and roll them back and forth under your fingers to coat them all the way around. The shoulders and necks of bottle-neck rifle cases, which do not contact the pad surface, must also be lubricated. Dab your forefinger on the pad to pick up a *light* film of oil, rub this finger against your thumb, and then twirl each case's neck and shoulder area between thumb and forefinger.



Above: Upper-shoulder dents after re-sizing indicate too much oil!

Ensure that you always push the case head fully into the shell holder so that it is perfectly aligned with the die, otherwise the die base will crush the case mouth. Run each case through the sizer die, lowering the press lever as far as it will go. The spent primers will fall into the catchment



Left: Lee hand-held case-neck trimmers (cartridge-specific) are inexpensive and very consistent, but slow and tiring. Insert the shaft so the pin enters the flash-hole; apply light pressure and twist until the shoulder 'bottoms' on the case web and the cutters cease trimming the mouth.

tray. Return each resized case to the loading block – inverted. On completion, unscrew the sizer die and return it to its box.

Next, de-grease the cases. This is essential – you *must* keep your fingers oil-free. Besides, oily ammo attracts dust and sand which can cause jamming. I use a cloth soaked in benzene to wipe each individual case clean (in a well-ventilated room).

For handgunners loading all-lead bullets, the



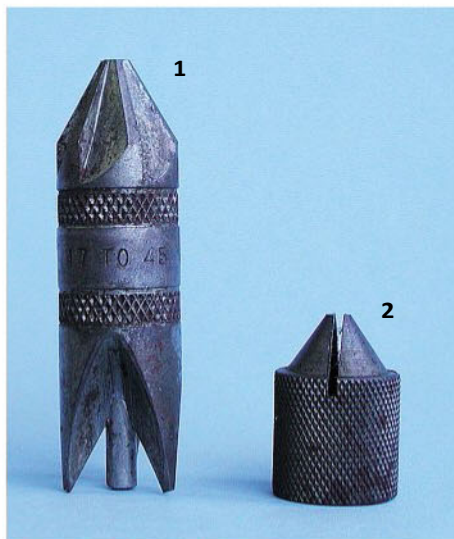
RCBS lathe-type universal case-trimmer accepts 'pilots' (neck guides) in all calibres and is adjustable for all case lengths. Fast and easy.

next stage is to 'bell' the case mouths. Raise the ram/shell holder to its full-height. Screw the expander die into the press until its base touches the shell holder, then screw the large locking ring down to contact the press. Now go through the same procedure as you did with the sizer die, locking the ring to the die without locking both to the press. Then loosen the smaller lock nut (on the stem of the expander plug) and screw the expander plug well upwards.

NOW LOWER the ram, place a sized case in the shell holder and run it up into the die (the shell holder should contact the bottom of the die). Screw the expander plug down again until you feel it starting to drag as it contacts the case mouth. Lower the ram again, and then screw the expander plug just a *half turn* or so lower within the die, and lock it in that position with its small lock nut. Now run the case up into the die again and it should come out with a very slight flair at the mouth (just visible to the naked eye). If you have overdone it, or not belled it enough, adjust the expander plug up or down accordingly, half a turn or so.

Now: rifle cases. The next step is to trim the cases to length. Each time you resize a bottle-neck case, its neck lengthens. If not trimmed, it will soon exceed the specified maximum case length. Furthermore, case necks do not lengthen uniformly – and differing neck lengths result in inconsistent bullet-release. For optimum accuracy, trim all your resized cases to the same length.

IF USING ONE of those little cartridge-specific hand-trimmers such as the Lee, you won't need a Vernier calliper – simply turn the trimmer until it 'bottoms' in the case. Hand-trimmers are slow and arduous but very consistent. If you have a universal case trimmer you must set it for the specified 'trim-to' length for the particular cartridge you're reloading.



Above: (1) Author's RCBS chamfering tool has had 40 years of hard use. The cone-point does the insides of the case mouths (fits all calibres). Twirling the case necks inside the 'fins' of the lower end chamfers the outsides. (2) Lee chamfering tool (same principle) costs less.

Designs differ: follow the manufacturer's instructions. Some can be set like a micrometer for the specified length; others require you to trim a case down in small decrements until it's the correct length then lock the trimmer on

it. Thereafter, trim each case until the blades cease to remove shavings. Retain one correctly trimmed case for each calibre, to use for setting the trimmer when next reloading that calibre.

Do not trim the cases *before* resizing them, for they will lengthen again during resizing, and end up different lengths.

Retain one correctly trimmed case for each calibre to use when resetting the trimmer

Case-trimming – even if barely a touch – burrs the case mouth inside and out. If not de-burred, the shavings

interfere with bullet-seating and neck-expansion on firing, which can considerably raise pressures, destroy accuracy, and possibly cause jamming. Use a universal de-burring tool – simply give each case-mouth a few light turns back and forth with both ends of the tool. Don't be rough, and try to keep the tool concentrically

Below: Low-cost Lee primer-pocket cleaner (scraper). Insert and twirl between thumb and forefinger. Tiny wire brush types are also available.

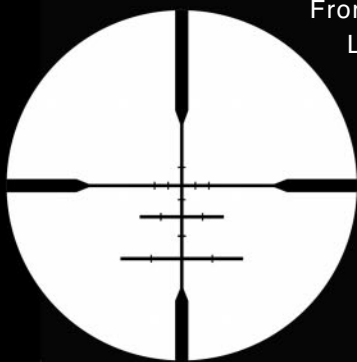


aligned with the cartridge case for uniformity. Larger calibres need proportionately more turns than smaller calibres (a .308 case-neck needs about six light turns inside and out). Don't overdo it – don't put a knife-edge on it.

FINALLY, CLEAN OUT the primer pockets with the appropriate scraper or brush. You have now completed all the most arduous stages of the reloading procedure. 

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BE SURE TO LOOK INTO LYNX

Many Bangs and a Boom

by **LESLIE VAN DER MERWE**

"TWO SHOTS per target, reload, and fire a further two shots per target in eight seconds," commanded the Range Officer.

As the timer buzzed I drew my pistol, fired two shots at the first target, moved to the second target, fired the first shot, and then my Glock went BOOM! It was as if it had bitten my hand, and I instinctively threw it to the ground.

I looked at my right hand. There was a black mark



**Above: The slide had slipped off the front rail, freezing the pistol.
Left: Cracked chamber and case.**

running along my index finger and my thumb. The tissue was slightly burnt in places, and my thumb throbbed, but fortunately all my body parts were intact and working. I felt something burning my cheek, below my shooting glasses. I wiped it with my left hand which revealed a small amount of blood.

LOOKING DOWN, I saw that the magazine had blown out of the pistol. Gingerly, I picked up my pistol. The slide and frame were bulged, and I could not cycle it. The front of the slide had jumped off the frame rail on the left side and try as I might, I could not budge it.

I iced my hand on the drive home, and tried to figure out what had gone

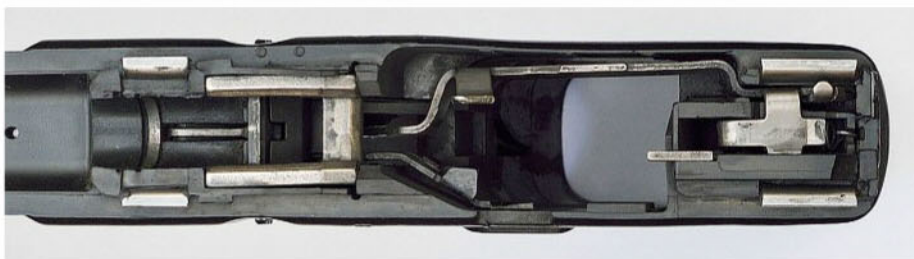
wrong. I bought this pistol 21 years ago, and have put in excess of ten thousand rounds through it. I have carried it often – its compact size and relatively light weight make it easy to carry in an ankle holster. I shot it regularly to ensure that I would be totally confident should the need arise for me to use it in self-defence. Some years ago the extractor broke, and I quickly replaced it. On another occasion the plastic rear sight was bumped out of the frame, and I refitted it.

During the next few weeks I took a long hard look at my reloading procedures, and researched what could have gone wrong. Reloading is a poten-

tially dangerous activity, and so is shooting. How many times haven't I read those disclaimers in books and magazine articles during the 40 years that I have been shooting and reloading?

THE INTERNET has many examples of pistols representing most if not all manufacturers, doing a "KABOOM" as it is termed. One reason for this is that all semi-automatic pistols have an area where the case is not supported by the chamber, due to the feed ramp intruding into the chamber. This is typically where case failure occurs.

The Glock Model 23 is chambered for the .40S&W cartridge, which is



Left: Bulged frame no longer useable.

Below: Escaping gas separated the plastic from the frame and damaged the lip.

regarded as a high-pressure round, running at 33 000psi, (similar to the 9mm Parabellum). In contrast, that old stalwart, the .45 ACP runs at 21 000psi. The external dimensions of the barrel of the model 23 and model 19 (9mm Parabellum) are identical, meaning that Glock drilled out the 9mm barrel to accommodate the .40. The larger diameter cartridge resulted in less support for the case in the area of the feed ramp, when compared to the Model 19. This is especially true in the early models, such as mine. Glock has rectified this problem in later models. My cases, however, exhibit the typical bell shape as a result of this.

When reloading I follow a process of checking and rechecking every step in the procedure. With a single stage press I use a plastic loading tray, dispense the powder using

an RCBS powder measure, and for ball and flake powder I weigh the powder for the first and the last cases. I individually check the level of powder in every case before proceeding to seat the bullet.

TEN YEARS AGO I purchased a Lee Pro 1000 progressive press; a real time-saver as an hour or two spent using it is all I need for a Club competition, and some extra rounds for additional practice. This press can be finicky in feeding primers, and I always sit to the right of the press, monitoring each case through the primer seating process to make sure it seats



► **Magnum asked Lee to respond:**

SOME OF THE double base powders, that is powders that are made from both nitrocellulose and nitroglycerin can attack the hopper material. This would only occur after an extended stay in the hopper. That is why powder manufacturers suggest the powder be removed from the hopper immediately after use. I have never known the powder to cake or bind from extended storage.

.40S&W Glock blow ups were common place shortly after they were introduced in the United States. Most blow ups involved reloads and all were a result of the case blowing out into the large unsupported chamber area unique to the Glock pistol. I believe that Glock has reduced the amount of chamber that is unsupported on later generation pistols but they still do not recommend using reloads in their firearms.

We specifically caution in our load data: "Do not use reloads in Glock or similar guns with chambers that do not fully support the cartridge due to the intrusion of the feed ramp." - **John Lee, President**



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L-r: Factory load; my standard reload; and a double-charged reload.

correctly. I check the level of powder in a case only if there has been a bit of fiddling, usually caused by the primer feeder. I settled on a 180 grain, gas-checked cast bullet, loaded with 6.2 grains of MP200. This is pretty much a starter load; it is accurate and cycles the pistol perfectly. There is a noticeable difference in recoil when using factory loads. In theory, my mild load should not cause any excessive wear or strain on the pistol.

I TOOK MY pistol to the agents and they were very helpful. A gunsmith used a hammer to remove the slide, and I could see the extent of the damage. The case had blown not only in the unsupported area, but had also split along the side. This in turn caused the chamber to crack, and I assume that this is what caused the slide to slip off the front rail. A lot of gas blew down through the magazine-well, ejecting the magazine and

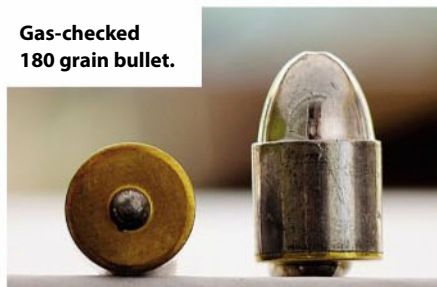
Below: Forefinger and hand burnt, with some deeper tissue damage indicative of an explosion. Much of the powder residue washed off by applying ice.



damaging its lips and frame. The pistol frame had bulged, as had the slide, which had also cracked around the extractor. I checked the barrel and chamber for signs of leading. It was clean. None of the parts were salvageable. In the agents' opinion, what caused the pistol to let go was, in all probability, a combination of factors.

On examining the bits and pieces I tried to make sense of what had happened. The classic 'kaboom' did not explain this outcome. I double charged a case and seated a bullet. The powder occupied enough case volume to render the overall cartridge length too long to fit in a magazine. I therefore ruled out double-charging as the probable cause. Too little powder can also cause a cat-

Gas-checked 180 grain bullet.



astrophic blow-up. The reasons for this are not fully understood, but one theory is that it exposes a greater surface area of powder to the primer flame, setting up opposing pressure waves which can coincide to cause a spike in pressure similar to detonation.

If powder is left for some time in the powder hopper of the Lee Pro 1000 progressive, it's possible for it to cake, and consequently throw too little powder. Could this have been the cause?

Using a 180 grain bullet in the .40S&W can also be problematic. This bullet takes up a lot of space in the case, and even slight bullet set-back can spike pressures significantly. A build up of lead in the bar-

rel or chamber can cause bullet setback, but this was not an issue in my pistol. I taper-crimp my pistol cartridges to ensure smooth feeding. These bullets sit tight, as evidenced when using a kinetic bullet-puller. It takes 2-3 really hard clouts for the bullet to move.

I tried to make sense of it – the classic 'kaboom' did not explain this outcome

While I ruled this out as the major cause of the BOOM, the fact is that the 180 grain bullets require higher pressure to overcome their moment of inertia, compared to lighter bullets. When the .40S&W was launched, the FBI initially recommended 180 grain bullets as a carry load. They now recommend 165 grain bullets.

The Internet has some examples of Glocks being capable of firing out of battery, and of course this could be an additional factor in my Glock's demise. The recoil spring has never been replaced, but in its current state it is impossible to check it.

I HAD A LONG hard look at the various pistols currently available. It did not take me long to make up my mind: I bought a new Generation 4 Glock model 23, and now await the licence. The issue of cases bulging has seen improvement in the newer models, but I will still batch my cases and throw the lot out at the first sign of a potential problem. The recoil spring has been redesigned, and anyway, it makes sense to use 165 grain CMJ bullets – they not only reduce pressure but also solve any leading problems. Is it possible to over or undercharge with the Lee 1000? I don't know, but I have rigged a light that shines in the case and will be checking the powder level of each cartridge before seating the bullet. 

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12ga	Izarm Gladiator Pump	R 4 375
20ga	Izarm O/U ET, ST, Multi Choke	R10 975
12ga	ATA O/U Engraved	R24 150
12ga	ATA O/U Silver	R15 350
12ga	ATA O/U Black	R15 350
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12ga	Webley & Scott O/U	R16 950
12ga	Beretta Silver Pigeon 1	R28 500
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.223	Marlin	R 7 995
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.243 Win	Remington	R17 950
.243	Marlin	R 7 995
25-06	TC Venture	R13 850
.22/250	Howa	R13 850
.243 Win	CZ 550	R17 700
.243 Win	T/C Dimension L/H	R13 200
.243 Win	Winchester	R17 670
.243	Mauser	R11 500
6.5 x 55	Howa	R11 450
6.5 x 55	Tikka T3 Sporter	R38 650
6.5 x 55	CZ	R20 950
6.5 x 57	Brno	R12 500
.270 Win	T/C Dimension L/H	R13 200
.270 Win	Mossberg	R10 995
.270 Win	CZ 550	R14 475
.270 Win	Mauser	R14 500
.270 Win	Winchester	R17 670
.270	Sako	R13 750
7mm-08	Remington 700	R13 500
7 x 57	CZ 550	R18 380
.308 Win	Howa - NEW	R11 380
.308 Win	Howa S/Steel	R13 160
.308 Win	Winchester Coyote	R16 950
.308 Win	Tikka T3 Sport	R33 600
.308 Win	Howa Wood	R11 260
.308 Win	CZ Predator	R14 620
.30-06	T/C Icon Weather	R20 330
.30-06	Tikka - Laminated	R19 440
.30-06	Winchester (Super)	R25 720
.30-06	Winchester	R22 750
.30-06	Winchester (Alaskan)	R23 897
.30-06	Steyr	R39 150
.30-06	Marlin	R 7 995
.300 WSM	Tikka - Laminated	R19 440
.300 Win Mag	Tikka - Wood	R19 500
8 x 57	Sako	R24 150
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12ga	Dumoulin 32" BL EJ 1/2 & Full	R 9 750
12ga	Army & Navy 30" BL NE 1/4 & 3/4	R12 500
12ga	S/S W. Powel 30"	R 4 500

SHOTGUNS: PUMP-ACTION - USED

12ga	Omega	R 2 950
12ga	Smith & Wesson	R 2 950
12ga	Winchester	R 3 500

RIFLES: SEMI-AUTO - NEW

.308 Win	AR MP 10	R32 020
.223 Rem	AR Norinco	R13 995
.22 LR	AR UR GSG	R15 535

LEVER	.45/70	Marlin	R 13 500
ACTION	.45/70	Marlin S/S	R 18 440
RIFLES	.30/30	Winchester	R 12 500
	.30-30	Rossi	R10 100

RIFLES - NEW

.375 H&H	Sako	R30 275
.416 Rigby	CZ 550	R25 280
.270	T/C Dimension	R12 750
.338win	T/C Venture	R13 850
.45-70	Pedersoli Kodiak Double	R42 175

HANDGUNS - NEW

9mmP	CZ P07 Duty	R 9 750
9mmP	S & W M&P	R13 090
9mmP	S & W V-Tac M&P	R15 850
9mmP	Grand Power Compact	R 9 330
9mmP	Taurus 27/7 Pro	R 7 690
9mmP	Taurus 24/7 G2C	R 9 520
9mmP	Taurus PT111 Pro	R 7 870
9mmP	Taurus 917C	R 9 920
9mmP	S & W Shield	R13 090
9mmP	Glock 17	R 9 750
9mmP	Glock 19	R 9 750
9mmP	Glock 23	R11 200
9mmP	Taurus PT92	R10 870
7,62mm	Tokarev Norinco	R 3 250
9mmP	Norinco 201C	R 3 250
7,62mm	Tokarev Norinco	R 3 250
9mmP	Norinco 201C	R 3 250

HANDGUNS - USED

9mmP	Star M30	R 3 950
9mmP	Norinco NZ 75	R 4 950
9mmK	Astra	R 2 150
9mmK	Llama	R 1 350
9mmP	Walther P38	R 2 950
9mmP	Luger P-08	R 7 500
9mmP	FN High Power	R 5 500
.357 Mag	Ruger	R 3 250
.357 Mag	Astra	R 2 450
.357	S&W Mod 13-2	R 3 750
.357	Ruger Speed Six	R 2 950
.38spl	Astra 4"	R 1 450
7.65	Lorcin	R 1 450
7.65	Beretta	R 1 950
7.65	Keltec	R 5 500
45acP	Star PD	R 3 950
6,35mm	Walther TPH	R 4 950
.22mag	Hi-Standard Derringer	R 2 950
.22	Ruger Single-Six	R 3 950
.22	Colt Revolver	R 4 500
.22	North American Arms	R 3 950

NEXT AUCTION

28 NOVEMBER 2015

PORTUGUESE HALL
NINA STREET, WITBANK

VIEWING FROM 9H00 - 11H45
AUCTION STARTS 12H00

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DOG TRAINING AIDS

Canicalm Anti-Bark	R 750	Training Dummies	R 100
Canicom 200 First	R2 050	Canibeep Pro	R 900
Canicom 200m	R1 950	Canibeep Radio Pro	R 1 920
Canicom 800m	R3 680	Navidog Collars	R11 975
Canicom 1 500m	R3 680	Navidog Receivers	R 4 215
Canicom Receivers	R1 800	Stop Barking Dogs (new)/R	250

MILITARY SURPLUS

7.62mm Nato G3 s/auto A-grade refurbished Rifles	R13 500
.303BR No4 Mk2	R 2 650
R1 FN/FAL	From R 7 500 - R15 545
Mosin-Nagant	R 2 750
Uzzi	R 6 500
R76	R 5 500
Fusil M24/29 7.5mm	R 7 500
R1 FN Para - Fal	R24 950
.223 Rem CR21	R14 500
7,62 x 39 AK Norinco S56S	R 6 500
7,62 x 39mm SKS S/Auto Carbine	R 6 500

UBERTI LEVER-ACTION RIFLES

.45LC & .44-40 Winchester M66 "Yellowboy" Carbine 19"	R16 200
.45LC & .44-40 Winchester M66 "Yellowboy" Rifle, 24,25"	R16 975
.357mag Winchester Mod 1873 Carbine, 19"	R18 450
.357mag Winchester Mod 1873 Sporting Rifle, 24,25"	R19 225

UBERTI HANDGUNS

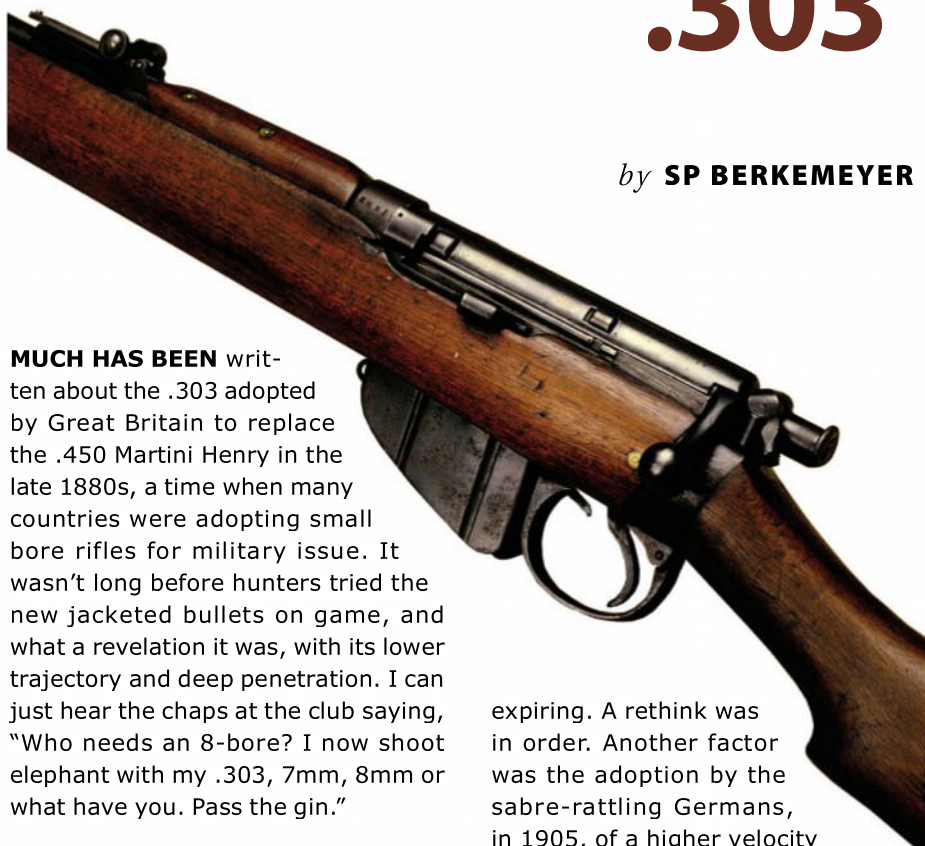
.44-40 Cattleman 5,5" & 7,5"	R 7 600
.45LC Cattleman "Gunfighter" 4,75" , 5,5 & 7,5"	R 7 010
.357mag Cattleman Q.D.4,7 , 5,5 & 7,5	R 7 640
.357mag & .45LC Cattleman Birdhead 4,75"	R 7 640

RIFLES - USED

.22 Hornet	Zidi	R 9 500	.308	Musgrave	R11 500
.22 Hnt	Brno	R 8 950	.308 Win	Sauer & Son 200 with	
.22LR	BSA Semi-Auto	R 3 450		Swarovski Scope	R27 500
.22LR	Remington	R 2 950	.308	Ruger - Scoped	R15 950
.22LR	Winchester	R 3 950	.338 Win Mag	Sabi Mauser	R12 500
.222	Tikka	R 9 500	.30-06	"Classic"	R 9 500
.223 Rem	CZ & Lynx Scope	R14 950	.30-06	Parker Hale	R11 500
.243	Tikka + Scope	R11 500	.30-06	Sako	R18 500
.243	Musgrave	R12 500	.30/06	Weatherby with Scope	R17 500
.243	Mauser	R11 500	.30-06	Remington	R12 825
.243	Bsa - Scoped	R 7 500	.30-06	Weatherby	R17 434
.243	Voere	R 9 500	.30-06	Musgrave	R12 500
.243	Ruger - Scoped	R15 950	.30-06	Tikka with Rings	R14 500
.25-06	Ruger - Scoped	R15 950	.30-06	Browning - Scoped	R13 950
6.5 x 55	Mauser	R 8 500	.30-06	Musgrave - Scoped	R12 500
6,5 x 57	Brno M20/21	R12 500	.30-06	FN	R10 500
.270	Brno	R11 500	.30-06	Voere - Scoped	R11 500
.270	Musgrave with scope	R11 500	.30-06	Sako - Scoped	R17 500
.270 Win	Mauser M66	R16 500	.300 Win Mag	CZ	R14 500
.270	Weatherby & Scope	R14 500	.375 H&H	Winchester	R13 500
.270 Win	Sako	R13 750	.375 H&H	Musgrave	R12 500
.270 Win	Sako	R 8 500	.375 H&H	Jeffery -7mm Mag 98	R67 500
7 Rem Mag	Browning	R17 500	.375 H&H	Interarms - Scoped	R14 500
7mm Rem M90	Sauer with Scope	R34 500	.375 H&H	Ruger - Scoped	R17 950
7mm Rem Mag	Sauer 200	R19 500	.378	Brno	R16 950
7 x 57	Brno (New Barrel)	R17 500	9.3 x 62	FN	R14 500
7 x 57	Brno	R 8 500	.30/06	Brno	R12 500
7 x 64	Brno - Scoped	R12 950	.270	Musgrave	R11 500
.303	Lee Enfield	R 3 750	8 x 60	Brno	R14 500
.303	BSA	R 4 500	8 x 60	Brno	R14 500
.308	Truvelo	R14 500	9mm	Mannlicher-Schönauer	R 9 750
.308	Voere	R 7 500			

The Humble .303

by SP BERKEMEYER



MUCH HAS BEEN written about the .303 adopted by Great Britain to replace the .450 Martini Henry in the late 1880s, a time when many countries were adopting small bore rifles for military issue. It wasn't long before hunters tried the new jacketed bullets on game, and what a revelation it was, with its lower trajectory and deep penetration. I can just hear the chaps at the club saying, "Who needs an 8-bore? I now shoot elephant with my .303, 7mm, 8mm or what have you. Pass the gin."

And there's the rub. While these small-bores can and did kill big game, they were not designed for this. Rigby's .450 Nitro Express (1898) certainly was, and proved highly successful, but human nature being what it is, sportsmen persisted in using the new jacketed service ammunition. The .303 did well enough in the big game fields as long as the 215gr round nose bullet was used and shot placement was precise (as demonstrated by 'Karamojo' Bell). But, militarily, things changed when enemy Somalis demonstrated the poor stopping power of the .303 on humans when they broke the British square at Gumburu in 1903. The moderately paced 215gr round nose FMJ bullet tended to slip clean through a man, causing little or no peripheral damage, leaving the frenzied Somalis healthy enough to account for their fair share of British Tommys before

expiring. A rethink was in order. Another factor was the adoption by the sabre-rattling Germans, in 1905, of a higher velocity spitzer bullet for their 8x57.

Enter the .303 MK VII 174gr spitzer round in 1910, designed to tumble on impact. It proved a great man-stopper – a tumbling bullet creates horrendous wounds for the first few inches of penetration while technically remaining within the bounds of the Hague Convention – but it was hopeless on pachyderms, buffalo and large antelope, since a tumbling bullet doesn't penetrate sufficiently in big game. The previous .303s Marks II to VI with their 215gr round nose bullet could pene-

trate and maintain direction in large soft skinned game, and in the right hands, also in the heads of elephants, but this next generation Mk VII bullet could not. Its paper ballistics looked very good, so when it appeared, the man in the street (or on the farm) could be forgiven for thinking that its 174gr bullet at 2440fps and muzzle energy of 2310ft-lbs, was superior to the previous issues of ammunition. The bottom line is that the Mk VII .303 cartridge was very effective in the trenches of the First World War, but quickly got a reputation as a wounder in the hunting field.

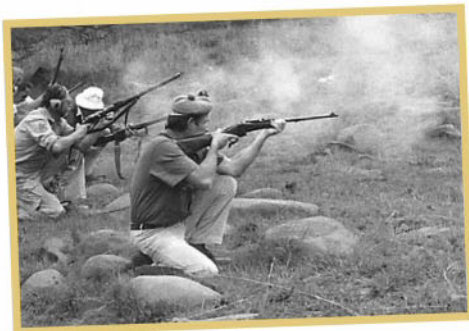
As a boy growing up in Northern Rhodesia in the 1950s, I recall that .303s were not permitted for hunting. In the 1960s, I visited a farm in South West Africa where the owner would not allow .303s. He was German and favoured the 7.9mm (8x57) Mauser. Was this prejudice? I don't think so. He knew that many South Africans hunted with military MK VII ammunition in their .303s. Perhaps he should have said, "No .303 MK VIIIs," not "*Keine .303 gewehre erlaubt.*"

Despite all this, .303 sporters were popular in their day, due to the avail-

HOW DOES THE .303 COMPARE TO ITS CONTEMPORARIES IN ORIGINAL FORM?				
Calibre	Bullet Weight (gr)	MV	ME	
.303 British	215	2050	2010	Original military MK VI*
7mm (.275)	175	2296	2025	Original military loading
6.5mm (.256)				
Mannlicher Schoenauer	159	2223	1740	Original military loading
7.9mm	226	2093	2198	Pre 1905

*Unfortunately I do not have the data for the MKII loading

ability of *commercial* ammunition loaded with expanding bullets. In addition to 'sporterised' military rifles, many British gun makers built dedicated sporters on Lee Enfield or P14 actions, while single-shot rifles were built on Martini and Farquharson type actions. Double rifles in .303 were also popular among wealthier sportsmen, and quite a few 'Cape guns' – side-by-side combination guns in .303 and 16 or 12 bore, were imported to SA. The Americans even chambered the 1895 Winchester lever-action in .303 "British", probably for the Canadian Market.



Various forms of .303s in action.

Commercial (sporting) .303 ammunition was produced by ICI and Kynoch based on the MK VI configuration, that is, a 215gr round nose FMJ bullet or soft nose, split or hollow point. Before ceasing production in the 1960s, Kynoch were still producing steel-jacketed bullets, gilding metal coated – I used these extensively with great satisfaction. Other sporting bullet weights were available, down to 150gr at quoted velocities of up to 2700fps.

During the pre-PMP years, the SA Mint produced a 174gr spitzer soft nose which duplicated MK VII velocities. I found them very destructive on small game like spring-buck, and before I turned to hand-loading, I reverted to using Kynoch 215gr ammunition even for the small animals. The

180gr Sako round nose softs became my standard load when, regrettably, my supply of Kynoch ammunition ran out.

For years I used a Westley Richards single-shot .303 with 215gr bullets on kudu, gemsbuck and blue wildebeest with

total satisfaction. I also used 180gr hand-loads on smaller game. Yes, the .303 was and is a great rifle. Use the right ammunition and it is all you will need for general bushveld hunting of non-dangerous game. However, for shooting on flat, open plains, as in the Free State, the trajectory is just too curved. Hand-loaders whose rifles are on P14 actions can push up the velocity, which helps. But otherwise the .303 is a bushveld rifle. After the Brits had faced the Boers' 7x57s during the 1899-1902 Boer War, they were well aware of the .303's shortcomings, and had started experimenting with a high velocity .276 (7mm) rifle and cartridge when the 1914-18 war interrupted play. But that is another story. 

Use the right ammunition, and it is all you need for general bushveld hunting

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Post-Hunting Season Specials

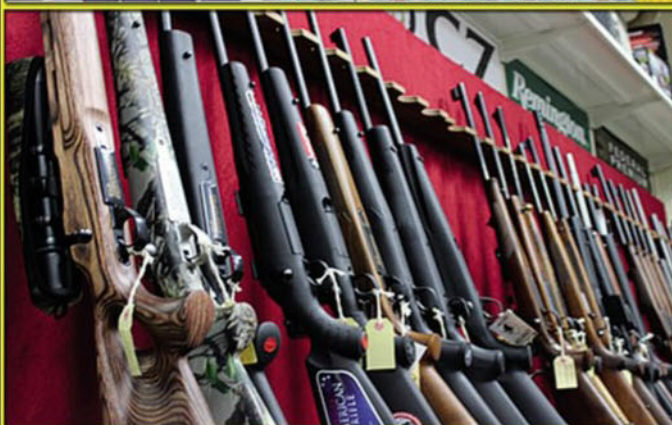
HOWA		Hornady Auto Charge Dispenser	R 3 000
Stainless Steel Hogue	R 9 500	Sako 25-06 Laminated	R22 000
Blue Wood Stock	R 9 800	Sako 243 Wood	R24 500
Varmint Synthetic	R 9 500	Sauer 202	from R30 000
Varmint Laminated	R11 500	Winchester 375 H&H Safari	R24 500
Blue Hogue	R8 500	Winchester T22 Match	R440 for 500

Sauer 202 30-06
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Springfield's XD Mod 2 Sub-Compact Pistol

by **PAUL SCARLATA** photos **BECKY SCARLATA**



The XD Mod 2 is the newest addition to Springfield Armory's extensive line of polymer frame pistols. Visible here are the trigger-block safety, take-down and slide-release levers and the GripZone texturing of the grip frame. The Mod 2 comes with a 16-round X-Tension magazine. Note that the sleeve has the same external dimensions as the grip frame.

I AM A BIG FAN of polymer frame pistols. I obtained my first one in the 1980s and since then have owned close to twenty of them in various makes and calibres. While I still own 'traditional' pistols (with steel/alloy frames) and enjoy shooting them, all the handguns I use for home-defence, concealed-carry and competition are currently 'plastic' pistols. I have become particularly enamoured of Springfield Armory's XD and XD(M) pistols.

Best known for their line of 1911-A1 pistols and the M1A1 rifles, Springfield Armory wanted a product that would enable them to break into the police market. On testing a polymer-framed pistol made by IM Metal Corporation of Croatia, they perceived this to be what they needed to achieve this goal. After some minor changes, it was re-introduced on the American market as the Springfield Armory X-treme Duty Pistol, better known simply as the XD.

The XD's polymer frame provides excellent resistance to abuse, wear, oils, solvents, and the environment. Many of the internal components are also produced from polymer. The slide

ACCURACY TEST RESULTS:

Ammunition	Best Group	Velocity
Hornady 100gr FTX	52mm	1089fps
CCI Blazer 115gr FMJ	55mm	1103fps
Black Hills 124gr JHP	50mm	1068fps
Rem 147gr Golden Sabre	32mm	947fps

NOTE: Accuracy results are the best of three 5-shot groups fired from a hand-rest from 10 metres. Velocity is the average of five rounds chronographed 3 metres from the muzzle.

reciprocates on rails that are part of a steel locking block, further stabilised by two rails that are integral to the rear of the frame. Most models feature rails on the dust-cover for mounting tactical lights or lasers.

THE SLIDE IS machined from solid steel and is protected by a Melonite finish (a process that uses a salt bath of alkali cyanate). Locking is provided by the barrel hood moving up into, and bearing on the front edge of the ejection port. When the pistol is fired, the barrel and slide move together a short distance, before the barrel drops down on the locking block, allowing the slide to continue to the rear, extracting and ejecting the spent case. A dual recoil spring located under the barrel then pulls the slide forward, stripping the next round out of the magazine and chambering it. As the slide goes into battery the barrel is pulled up and its hood engages the ejection port, locking the two units together.

XD pistols have six separate safety devices: a grip-safety at the rear of the frame; a trigger-block safety



The XD Mod 2 uses a fibre-optic front sight and dual white-dot rear sight. Note the cocked striker indicator and grip safety.

forward, the wide striker-tail engages a fixed sear in the frame which holds it back. Pulling the trigger through a full stroke depresses the trigger block safety and there is a bit of 'springloaded' take-up before the firing-pin safety is depressed and the sear is tripped.

Over the years the XD line has expanded and now includes Service, Tactical (long slide), Compact, Sub-compact and Competition models in 9mm Para, .357 SIG, .40 S&W and .45 ACP.

The Sub-compact XD Mod 2 was introduced in late 2014 and features double-column magazines with capacities of thirteen (9mm) and nine (.40) rounds while the supplied X-Tension magazines increase that to sixteen and twelve rounds respectively.

Ergonomics have been improved in every possible way. The XD Mod 2's GripZone frame features three distinct textures, each engineered for a specific purpose. The re-contoured, slimmer frame provides

SPECIFICATIONS: Springfield XD Mod 2

Calibre	9mm Para
Overall length	159mm
Barrel length	76mm
Height	121mm
Grip width	30mm
Weight (unloaded)	737g
Construction:	slide: forged steel frame: polymer
Finish:	Bruniral (stainless slide is optional)
Magazine:	13/16 rounds
Sights:	front: red fibre-optic rear: dual white dots

Special features: ambidextrous magazine releases, loaded chamber indicator, cocked striker indicator, cable lock, two spare magazines, holster, dual mag-pouch, magazine loader, carrying case, cable lock & owner's manual.

on the face of the trigger; a plunger type firing-pin safety; and a disconnecter that prevents the pistol from being fired unless the slide is fully forward.

In addition, at the rear of the ejection port is a loaded chamber indicator and, when cocked, the tail of the firing pin extends out the back of the slide.

a more natural grip feel while the high-hand grip relief and high-hand beavertail enable the hand to be positioned as high as possible on the pistol, reducing felt recoil. The no-snap trigger guard minimises possible unintended contact with a holster or clothing while the low profile rear- and fibre-optic front-sights provide a fast, clear sight picture.



Left: Accuracy testing was conducted at a measured 10 metres.

Below: Sample targets fired from 10 metres.



These devices provide both visible and tactical indications of the pistol's condition.

While the XD's USA (Ultra Safe Assurance) trigger system functions like a double-action trigger, it is technically a single action. As the slide runs



The Mod 2's slide is narrower than Springfield's other sub-compact XD pistols.

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The 9mm XD Mod 2 comes with standard 13 round and 16 round X-Tension magazines.

The more pronounced 'POSI-WEDGE' serrations make racking the slide much easier, even with wet or oily hands or when wearing gloves.

While the XD Mod 2 is available in 9mm Para and .40 S&W, I believe that in a pistol of this size, the former is the more user-friendly calibre.

The pistol I received came in a hard, padded carrying case with a polymer holster, dual magazine pouch, magazine loader and two magazines, one holding 13 rounds, the other a 16 round X-Tension magazine. The latter is fitted with a sleeve that approximates the outside dimensions of the grip frame and provides the shooter with a full-handed grip for better recoil control.

I WAS ESPECIALLY taken with the fibre-optic front sight, which I consider the most practical type, and I am happy to see that more and more manufacturers are now equipping their pistols with them. The rear sight is a low-profile unit with a square notch and dual white dots. I prefer a plain black sight, so I blacked out the dots with a black marker pen.

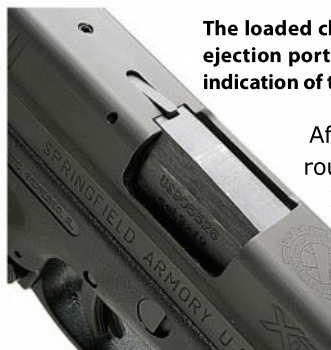
After examining the XD Mod 2, my wife Becky, who uses an XD(M) 5.25" pistol for action pistol competition, said

the Mod 2 was just the right size for carrying in a handbag holster she uses.

We test fired it for accuracy from ten metres with four brands of 9mm ammunition; the results of which can be seen on the chart. It really liked the Remington Golden Sabers, producing a very impressive 32mm group with all five rounds in the X-ring.

SETTING UP A combat target, we ran the Mod 2 through offhand drills from three and seven metres, firing the pistol with an unsupported (one-handed) grip from the closer distance.

We both have a bit of experience with the USA trigger and we had no trouble putting rounds where we wanted them. The sights proved very practical, allowing fast alignment and target acquisition. Recoil was a bit on the 'snappy' side but thanks to the GripZone texturing it was very controllable, especially when using the X-Tension magazine.



The loaded chamber indicator behind the ejection port provides a visual and tactile indication of the pistol's condition.

After running about 300 rounds through the Mod 2, I'm happy to report that it gobbled up whatever we stuffed into the magazines and spat out the spent cases with boring regularity.

WE WERE SUITABLY impressed with the 9mm XD Mod 2's handling. While it's a bit 'chunkier' than some sub-compact pistols, with the proper holster it should be easy to conceal, even under light clothing.

Our conclusion was that the XD Mod 2 would be quite suitable for home defence, concealed carry by licensed civilians, or as a backup or off-duty gun for law enforcement personnel.

IM Metal Corporation of Croatia market their polymer-framed semi-automatic pistols under the HS2000 name. Available from Dave Sheer Guns (011-440-0345) and Zimbi (012-349-1662). ■



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VIII 1-6x24 IR Duplex R8800.00
VIII 1-6x24 IR Mil-Dot R9250.00
VIII 2.5-15x50 IR SF Mil-Dot R8400.00

PRYSE GELDIG SOLANK VOORRAAD HOU

Under the Big Sky

by **ROBIN BARKES**



Glassing a deep valley dam for wildfowl.

THE DAWN OF a new day is a special time for me. For years it has been my habit to witness nature's paintbrush colour the horizon with a kaleidoscope of brilliant hues, ever-changing until the vast canvas is presented in all its glory.

Early one May morning I heard a lone Egyptian goose honk its way across the sky and from somewhere far off a guineafowl called to its clan. Something stirred deep within me and with that I rose up and sent off an SMS that simply read, "The mountains are calling." My friend Jason's reply came back within seconds: "Okay, next weekend!"

Before leaving, there were a few chores to be done. I decided to treat

myself to a real easy-going weekend: instead of taking along my muzzle-loading gun, I chose to use the old 12-bore Greener breech-loader once owned by my grandfather and passed on to me by my Uncle Phil when I was about 18 or 19. This old family heirloom was made back in the days of black powder cartridges, which means I have to roll my own. So, after cutting a few cardboard cartridge cases down to the required 65mm length I primed and loaded each one with three drams of Ffg powder, two felt wads between two card wads, $1\frac{1}{8}$ ounces No.5 shot followed by a final card wad, onto which I tightly roll-crimped the case mouth using an original old hand-turned machine.

THE FOLLOWING Friday Jason and I headed for his family farm in the Elands River Valley. On the way he explained the weekend's action: first, we would walk the hills for francolin then work our way into the valley to look for guineafowl and hunt the river for yellow-billed duck.

I listened in silence and after a thoughtful pause, hesitantly said, "Sounds great, but it seems like rather a lot of legwork." You see, I'd taken a hammering from two heart operations that considerably reduced my ability to walk long distances. With a big smile Jason put my mind at rest by saying that he has a surprise for me. When we reached the farm he revealed a new quad-bike.

Working the river banks to 'jump-shoot' ducks rising from the pools.



Our camp was nestled among a clump of *gwarrie* trees on a hilltop. We soon settled in, and it was a perfect evening, requiring only a small fire that quickly produced enough coals to grill a few pork sausages to wrap in buns. Later Jason slid into his Australian-made sleeping roll while I laid out my coffee-making gear next to my bedroll. Then I snuggled in and looked up at the stars winking at me between the leaves of the overhanging branches.

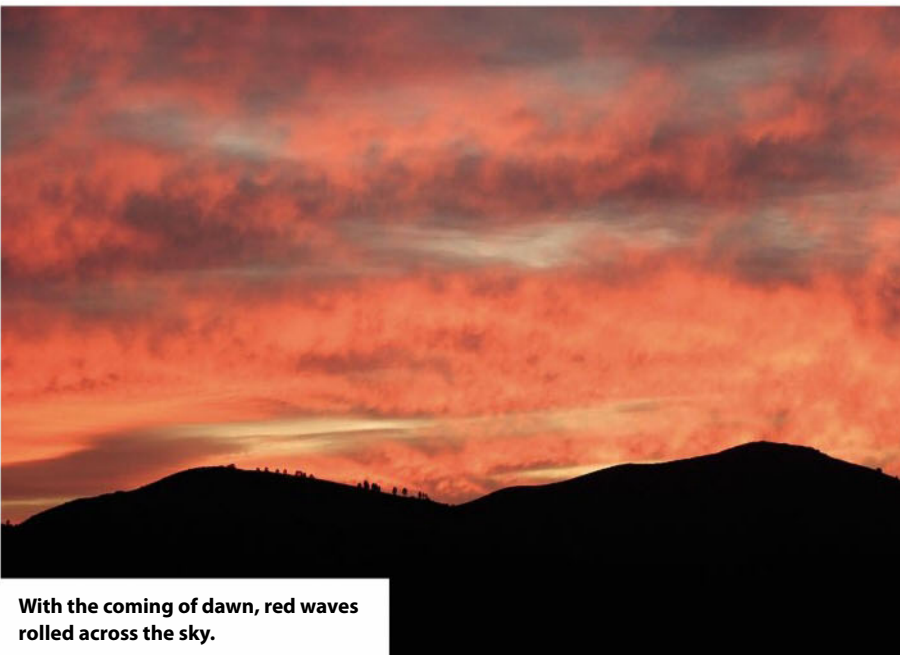
I awoke in the pre-dawn darkness and switched on my little solar-powered lamp. In its soft glow and without even leaving my bed, I boiled a tin mug of water on my small camp cooker to prepare my first caffeine fix of the day. Using the tiny scissors of my 'MacGyver' knife I snipped the corner off the sachet of 3 in 1 coffee. Imagine that: coffee in bed in a bush camp!

GLANCING AT THE eastern sky I figured I'd get another mug going before the first faint glow appeared. So, with hot coffee in hand I walked out to watch the dawn of a new day, which came in great red waves rolling over the black silhouette of the mountains. It was a glorious spectacle and as I stood alone in the silent veld feeling small and humble, all my troubles suddenly seemed so insignificant. Right at that moment I considered myself one of the luckiest men alive. I'm pretty sure if more people took the trouble to witness the beautiful spectacle given to us every morning, a lot of shrinks would go out of business.

Turning back into the camp I found Jason packing the quad. He secured two gun scabbards behind the seat and then added the bag containing his muzzle-loading gear. Our jackets were strapped in front of the handlebars.

SO OFF WE BUZZED along a rocky road with the balloon tyres of the quad giving a soft ride. When we stopped I slid out the Greener and waited while Jason loaded his double-barrelled 12-bore muzzle-loader for francolin. On his back he carried a scoped Lyman muzzle-

With the coming of dawn, red waves rolled across the sky.





The motorized wagon afforded us more hunting time, covering a greater area.

loading rifle stoked with a .45 calibre sabot bullet – good medicine for jackal and lynx. We set off through the sweet-smelling fynbos and purple heather. In the background loomed the majestic Groot Winterhoek mountains where the last of the wild Bushmen made their final stand in 1880, when they were hunted down by a commando of angry farmers whose cattle they had continually killed.

I WALKED SLOWLY through the knee-high fynbos holding the old gun across my chest, just as I had when I was young, and as Uncle Phil had before me and his father before him. For a few moments I thought I felt their presence – or was it simply nostalgia brought on by the old gun's smell given off by the ancient wood and metal in my hands? A hot northerly wind had sprung up and by now the heat had become draining. I guess the wildlife felt the same; we put up a duiker and saw several bushbuck tracks, but other than that, our long walk produced nothing. We repeated our tactics in several likely spots around the hilltops but this af-

forded us no opportunities. After a few hours we decided to move down into the cooler valley.

With great care we drove down an old wagon road originally dug out

by Jason's great, great grandfather, taking months of manual labour. On reaching the valley floor we spotted guineafowl. Jason dropped me off at an ambush spot while he circled around to walk them up, hoping to get a shot that would drive them towards me. After 20 minutes I heard the dull thud of Jason's gun and made ready for the rush of wings I expected to hear coming over me. None came and all I got was a crick in my neck from staring up at the sky above the tree tops.

LATER I WALKED out and saw Jason ambling across to the quad. He waved me over and explained that his shot had produced a puff of feathers, but his search of the area had been in vain. The rest of the flock had flown off in a direction away from where I waited. Typical!



Above: When rain threatened, we spread a cover over my bed.

Inset: My early morning coffee kit, set up next to my bed.

Below: I rested a while, awaiting targets of opportunity.





Jason leads the way through the fynbos where we hoped to put up francolin.

Next we tried working the edge of the river hoping to flush francolin or ducks which we would jump-shoot as they rose from the pools. On the way we passed the site of a very old camp scattered with shards of glass and rusty pieces of pots and pans used by old-time woodsmen. They chopped down the giant yellow-wood trees then laboriously sawed them into planks. But once again, except for a pair of black duck, which are protected, we saw no game. And that's how the rest of the day went. Nevertheless, simply being in the silent, sun-dappled forest was magical, and resting on a log surrounded by all that history and beauty, I felt like a free spirit, a veritable lord of the wilderness.

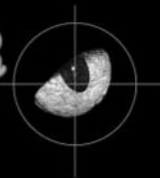
BY THE TIME we got back to camp we were ravenous, and Jason had a fire going before I even had my boots off to massage my aching feet. We ate a good supper of grilled meat and bread. Later, while we were preparing to turn in, a few big drops of rain fell. We quickly put up a cover in case the heat brought on a thunderstorm. Fortunately, other than a few more drops, nothing further disturbed the stillness of the night or the eternal silence of the infinite space above.

The next morning we decided our tactic should be more walking, because in the thick *fynbos*, without a gundog, your only chance to put up francolin is to practically step on them. So, we walked until I was on the verge of collapse and had to take a break, but Jason kept going until he was out of sight. I sat for a while at a dam hoping for a duck but saw only a group of blesbuck who eyed me curiously. After a while I slowly headed back. Just when I had the camp in sight, I heard the growl of the quad and Jason appeared like the cavalry to save me from that last 'killer' kilometre.

WE HAD A quick bite, packed up camp and soon we were heading back along the road leaving the farm. And guess what? A francolin flew across the track in front of us and minutes later another took flight right next to the vehicle. Then, just to rub it in, as we passed the little dam where I had sat for a while, we spotted a flock of yellow-billed duck happily swimming around.

Well, as I've always said, it's not the quantity of game shot but the quality of the outing that really counts. It's the experience of just being out there under the big sky that lures you back again and again. 

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.22 Handguns – Way to Go!

by **ANDRÉ GROBLER**



A .22 rimfire Hi-Standard Supermatic trophy pistol with metallic silhouette figures used by the SA Metallic Silhouette Shooting Association in the .22lr rifle class. The rimfire handgun figures are a fraction bigger. The targets are standing on a custom-made wooden case which holds the pistol, cartridges, magazine, barrel weights and other shooting accessories.

LEARNING TO SHOOT a handgun accurately is not easy. Two reasons are its short sight-radius and the fact that it is designed to fit into one hand only. You hold a rifle with two hands and have your shoulder and cheek as additional anchor points to provide steady support. With a handgun, fired offhand, you have only your other hand to provide support. Beginners learning to shoot a rifle usually start at a shooting bench with the rifle resting on a sand-bag. There is no reason why a learner hand-gunner shouldn't start the same way, but most begin from the offhand position. Some handgun sports do not allow a two-hand hold.

Most kids learning to shoot rifles, start with air-guns, followed by .22 rimfires, and graduate to bigger calibres as they grow in physical size and

confidence. The procedure for handgun shooters should be much the same, and there is no better starting point than the .22 rimfire.

MOST OWNERS of handguns acquired them for personal protection, having no interest in the shooting sports. Carrying a handgun for self-protection is an immense responsibility. One writer compared a person carrying a defensive handgun to a big-game hunter, since both require advanced knowledge, skill and experience, coupled with a heightened sense of judgement and responsibility. It's not something for rank beginners.

Irrespective of its designation, the .22 Long Rifle is the cartridge most modern .22 rimfire pistols and revolvers are chambered for. It is the high-

est-selling cartridge in the world; also the most popular for informal or recreational target shooting or plinking and for teaching youngsters and newcomers to shoot.

THE MODERN .22 rimfire cartridge has its roots in the Flobert .22 BB Cap cartridge of 1845. Shooting enthusiasts of the day wanted a small-bore, low-noise cartridge for indoor shooting matches (known as saloon or parlour shooting). The first to be developed was essentially a percussion cap (as used on muzzle-loaders) with a spherical lead pellet inserted in its mouth, and no propellant other than the priming compound. It was given a rim on which to head-space and was used in both 'saloon rifles and pistols'. Such indoor target shooting was popular in Europe and especially at fairgrounds. Its successor, the .22 CB Cap (CB for 'conical bullet') had the same case with a cylindrical or 'conical' bullet and a small charge of black powder. It was not a success, proving too noisy for indoor use.

In 1857 Smith & Wesson introduced the .22 Short cartridge for their First Model revolver. It was originally intended for serious self-defence, and loaded with

Right: This German – Deutsche Reigen Patent – pistol, chambered for the .22 Short and .22 Long cartridges, is in the style of the earlier ‘saloon pistols’.



Left: A .22lr single-shot free-style target pistol marked: Deutsche; Franz, Merkel and Zella-Mehlis. Record Match Model 210. Olympia Sieger Modelle, DRGM.



Inset: Top view of the free-style pistol showing the falling block action.

ever-popular .22lr we know today. In 1930 Remington produced the first High Velocity version, and more recently, extra-high-velocity versions have appeared.

What makes this cartridge so popular? For a start, the comparatively low cost of the ammunition. You can afford to shoot it *a lot*. This translates



Left: A .22 Browning Medalist International 2 pistol.

Right: Czechoslovakian target pistol – .22 Drulov Model 75 with 10 inch barrel.



4gr fine black powder and a 29gr heeled bullet. The .22 Short was used for target shooting – for a while even at Olympic level – and various heavy handguns in .22 rimfire were made for this discipline. In 1871 the .22 Long was introduced, but the minimal velocity increase resulting from its one extra grain of black powder lent it no practical value. Nevertheless, a smokeless powder version is still produced today.

In 1887, J. Stevens Arms & Tool Co introduced the .22 Long Rifle (lr) which had the same case-length as the .22 Long but was charged with 29gr black powder behind a 40gr bullet. Soon it was being loaded with smokeless powder, and it rapidly became the

as *fun*, not to mention extra practice, which ‘makes perfect’. Then there is its almost total absence of recoil, which is what makes it ideal for introducing youngsters and beginners to firearms, whether rifles or handguns – including small, lightweight handguns with short



Arminius HW9ST .22lr target revolver with 10 inch barrel.

barrels. A young shooter can focus on learning proper grip and stance without worrying that the gun will be unpleasant to fire.

The absence of significant recoil also helps light-boned people with slender wrists, such as youngsters, small-framed women, and also people with arthritis or wrists weakened by injuries. Heavy recoil, whether in handguns or rifles, is the single most intimidating

when using ear-guards. The .22 rimfire is not only easy on the shooter's ears, but also on those of bystanders. Many a shooting range has been shut down due to nearby residents or workers complaining of the noise. The .22 rimfire gives no reason for complaint –

Right: Ruger Bearcat, a single-action .22 calibre revolver.



Colt Peacemaker Buntline convertible .22lr/.22 Magnum (WMR) single action six-shooter.

Right: Numerous makes and types of .22lr ammunition are available for target shooting and plinking.



factor for beginners; at best, it impedes their progress; at worst it puts them off altogether and they don't come back. Learning to shoot *must* be a fun experience; all learners should start 'lite' and gradually progress to heavier calibres.

Another major reason for the popularity and all-round success of the .22 rimfire is its low noise. A loud "bang" puts many people off shooting, even

especially if match-grade or subsonic ammunition is used. An unfortunate consequence of the .22 rimfire's low noise factor is that, historically, this has also made it a popular poacher's calibre.

Contributing to the .22's wide popularity are the many loadings in which it's offered: .22 Short, .22lr subsonic,

.22lr match grade, .22lr standard velocity, high velocity and extra-high velocity (such as the highly popular .22 Stinger, distributed by CCI from 1977). Various bullet weights and designs are available including round-nose, spitzers, hollow-points, copper-coated and fine snake-shot. What is more, the .22 BB cap and .22 CB cap are still made – in much-improved versions. And, of course, being a low-pressure cartridge, it is easy to make low-cost handguns and rifles chambered in this calibre. The .22 rimfire cartridge probably boasts a wider spectrum of firearm

types than any other cartridge; these include the most basic, entry-level, single-shot rifles for boys, through to some of the most sophisticated and highly accurate target match .22 rimfire rifles and handguns made today.



Above: A well-used Llama pistol in .22lr.

Right: Beretta Model 71 lightweight semi-auto pistol in .22lr.



Handguns in .22 rimfire are available as revolvers, semi-automatic pistols and single-shot pistols. The once-popular (low cost) hinged top-break revolvers seem to have been dropped. Today's .22 rimfire revolvers come in solid-frame designs with swing-out cylinders and in single-action 'Peacemaker' designs.

The cylinders hold anything from five rounds in the 'mini' designs up to nine in the bigger models. For the uninitiated, the hammers of single-action revolvers have to be thumb-cocked for every shot, and each spent case is manually pushed out with a built-in ejector rod.

With double-action revolvers, the shooter simply pulls the trigger back against a mainspring, which action draws the hammer back and releases it to fire. In addition, double action revolvers provide optional single-action use (thumb-cocking, single-stage trigger release). The beauty of revolvers is their simplicity – fewer hand-operated controls, less to think about. There is no manual safety catch, nor is one necessary.

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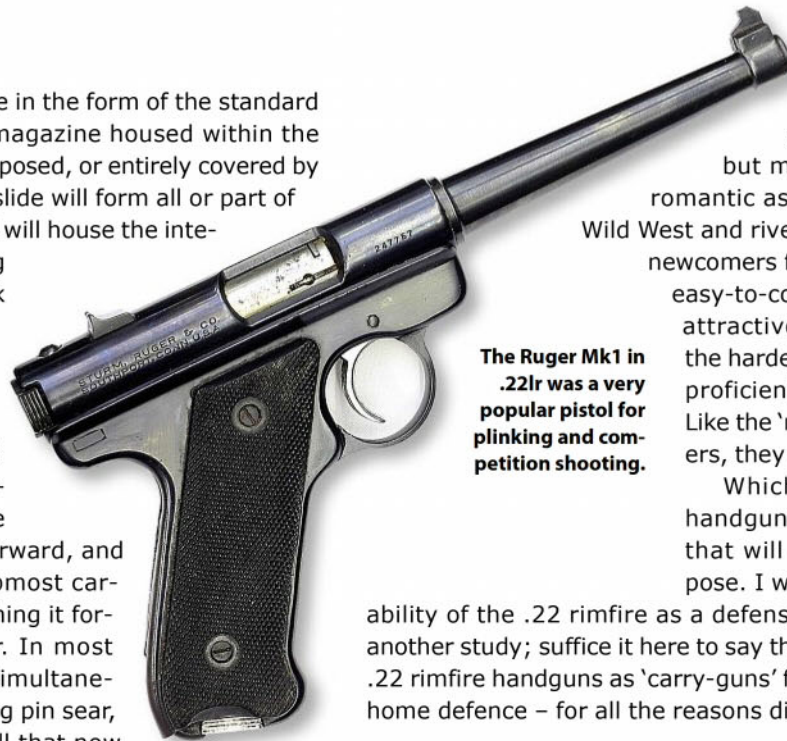
Most rimfire .22 pistols come in the form of the standard semi-auto format with a box-magazine housed within the hand-grip. The barrel may be exposed, or entirely covered by the steel slide. Either way, the slide will form all or part of the upper level of the pistol and will house the integral breech-block with its firing pin mechanism. It slides back and forth on rails.

WITH THE loaded magazine inserted in the hand-grip, the shooter grasps the slide and pulls it back against its mainspring, then releases it. The mainspring thrusts the slide forward, and its breech-face scoops the topmost cartridge from the magazine, pushing it forward into the barrel chamber. In most designs, this 'racking' action simultaneously cocks the hammer or firing pin sear, meaning that, to fire a shot, all that now remains is to press the trigger. Some semi-auto pistol designs have variations of the 'double-action' or combined 'double-action/single-action' trigger mechanism. Most .22 rimfire semi-auto pistols are of the simple blow-back action design, meaning that on firing, the recoil from the cartridge simply pushes the slide back against the mainspring to automatically repeat the abovementioned 'racking' cycle for further shots. These pistols have a safety catch and other external operating levers.

For the rank beginner, a revolver might be a better training tool than a semi-auto. It's safer and simpler to operate: less to learn, less to think about, hence the beginner is more relaxed and confident. In my experience, beginners learn quicker on revolvers than on semi-autos.

Perhaps the best handgun for teaching beginners is the single-shot pistol, mainly used in target match shooting. This is the simplest design of all, each cartridge being hand-fed directly into the barrel chamber. They are very accurate and easy to shoot well, and this builds that all-important confidence in the novice. The problem lies in finding someone who owns one and is prepared to put in the range time required to teach a beginner the basics.

THERE ARE OTHER rimfire .22 handgun designs, such as the diminutive double-barrelled Derringer type, a hinged, break-open design, but these are special-purpose, pocket or ladies' handbag pistols, theoretically intended



The Ruger Mk1 in .22lr was a very popular pistol for plinking and competition shooting.

for last-ditch defensive use at zero range, but mostly bought for their romantic association with the old Wild West and riverboat gamblers. Many newcomers find small, lightweight, easy-to-conceal carry-guns very attractive, but Derringers are the hardest to handle safely and proficiently, and to shoot well. Like the 'mini' .22 rimfire revolvers, they are not for the novice.

Which type of .22 rimfire handgun is best for you? Well, that will depend on your purpose. I will not go into the suitability of the .22 rimfire as a defensive cartridge – that is another study; suffice it here to say that many people favour .22 rimfire handguns as 'carry-guns' for personal defence or home defence – for all the reasons discussed in this article.

Tactical Pocket Pistol tips – what to consider when carrying a concealed pocket pistol. Scan the code.



Some people are simply intimidated by heavy recoil, or cannot handle bigger handguns, or cannot conceal one comfortably on their person. If you are such a person, consider the fact that when confronted by an armed attacker, a .22 handgun on your person, which you can shoot accurately and instinctively (due to all the low-cost practice sessions) is worlds better than a 9mm Para left in the gun safe at home, being too big and heavy for convenient carry. However, I must add that

choosing a handgun for personal defence entails manifold considerations and is an extremely subjective matter – seek advice from several different experts before making your choice.



Astra Cadix .22lr 9-shot revolver from Spain.

IF YOU WANT to compete in formal target shooting, this requires a specialized handgun, and again, you should discuss your needs with a few experts in these sports. If you desire a .22 rimfire simply for recreational use – informal target



Steel target frame with swinging targets. It is great fun for practise, and to see who can make the individual targets swing.

shooting and for shooting-practice, well, the world is your oyster. Go to a few dealers and examine what they have in stock. Handle these weapons – decide what ‘feels right’ for you – this will give you confidence in your handgun. Physically go through the operational procedures for both revolvers and semi-autos and see which you are most comfortable with. Go to a shooting range or club that offers beginners’ courses in shooting, and ask to be taught with both revolvers and semi-autos in .22 rimfire calibre.

It is much more difficult to become proficient in shooting a handgun than a rifle. My 16-year-old son is a competent rifle shooter and hunter who only recently expressed interest in learning to use a handgun. I took him to the range, where he was utterly surprised and disillusioned at how few of his ten shots appeared on his 10m target. He was using a .22 target pistol and a 9mm Short. He was disgusted with himself for being unable to hold the pistols steady enough for accurate shot placement. So don’t expect to become another ‘Dirty Harry’ in a day.

Having originated 170 years ago as one of the earliest self-contained metallic cartridges, the .22 rimfire remains the best cartridge when it comes to learning to shoot. 

Plinking at tin cans is one of the greatest joys of owning a .22 rimfire.



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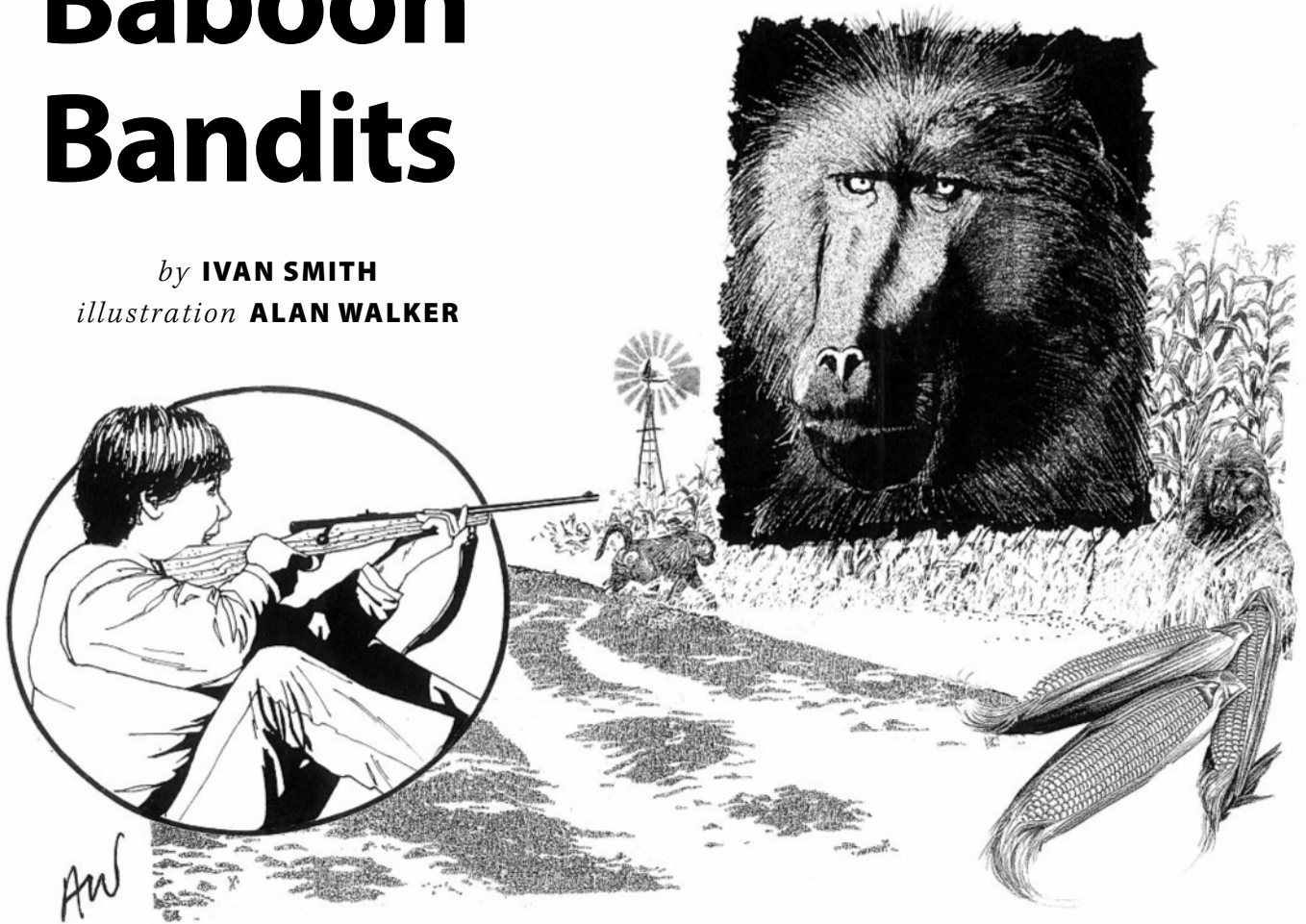
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Baboon Bandits

by **IVAN SMITH**
illustration **ALAN WALKER**



ACCORDING TO the experts, as I understand it, untold millions of years ago Asia and Africa split from a giant continent and shunted each other before drifting apart. Those earth crust collisions pushed up a series of mountains running east to west along the southernmost coast of Africa. Joubertina is in a long valley in one of those mountain ranges, and my nephew's land on the Kouga river is in a gorge two ranges inland from the village. All around is mountain country.

The harsh semi-desert scrub of this area is home to baboons, bushpig, small antelope and leopard. City dwellers also put a premium on housing on the higher land – perhaps because from high, enemies can be seen at a distance. The farms occupy all the lowlands here; level fields are planted, but any slightly level land on the ridges and mountain-sides is also

utilized. The farmhouses are mostly built near reliable water. Grootfontein is one such area where the boundaries of several farms and plots meet at the base of a range. The cultivated fields are planted to fodder for the cattle and sheep. The several homesteads all have fruit trees and vegetable gardens. These are the battlegrounds where man fights the bushpig and the baboon. It is an old war.

IN THE MOUNTAINS on the way to the farm is a field of wheat. Last week, casualties of that old war were strung up on the fence around the wheat: two dead baboons tied to fence poles as a warning to the rest of the troop not to return. This works. It reminded me of all the battles I have fought with the same enemy; battles that go back to the first half of the last century. The first skirmish was on my grandfather's

farm in the midlands of Rhodesia, near Gutu where the source of the Sabi river springs. It was a farm of many kopjes, of wheat and tobacco – magnets for baboons.

Two male kitchen staff, my brothers, uncle, aunt and I, all wore aprons and hats. My uncle carried the 12-bore double shotgun and I carried the old faithful BSA .22 single shot. The others carried brooms so that we all looked alike. That .22 had been my hunting rifle for some years. Whatever I shot with that rifle became the family meal for that day. The maize was ripe, higher than a man's head, and the kernels were big, pearly-white and heavy. A large troop of baboons had moved into the area and the edges of one maize-field were already bare of cobs. The crops were what fed the family, and there was none to spare. We were marching to war.

The baboons were on the highest kopje, silently watching as the posse walked to the maize field. Earlier on they had alerted us by distant barking. My uncle was certain that baboons could count and also tell the difference between man and woman. These animals were wary of men and stayed out of range if any man was carrying a firearm. The posse entered the maize field, and deep within that jungle of stalks, I sat down.

"Shoot straight," my uncle said. He was not a man who spoke much.

"Will you come?" I asked, afraid now.

"Yes. When you shoot, I will come."

THEY DEPARTED the maize field, leaving me alone. From the distant rock the odd loud warning bark rang out. The group of pseudo women with fake guns went back to the house and the distant barks faded away. It was time for me to move to a position in the field where I had a view of the approaches the baboon troop would use. I inched forward until in position, then sat down and thumbed a cartridge into the chamber. I left the cocking disc in the safe position, knowing it to be silent enough when pulled back to cock the firing pin. I waited, knowing the baboons' approach would be silent – they'd learned that to vocalise was to warn the distant house of their raid. Sitting there alone in the mealies, awaiting their arrival, I was suddenly struck by fear. Then I felt anger. That is normally what fear does.

THE TROOP CAME through the long brown grass which afforded them cover. At intervals, the inner circle of fighting males rose on their hind legs, hopping a few paces for a better view. I drew back the disc to cock the firing pin. With my elbows on my knees, the rifle was steady and there was not the slightest chance of missing. It had been drummed into us from early boyhood: each shot had to count. At my shot, the troop's advance halted and more of its members rose on their hind legs to peer

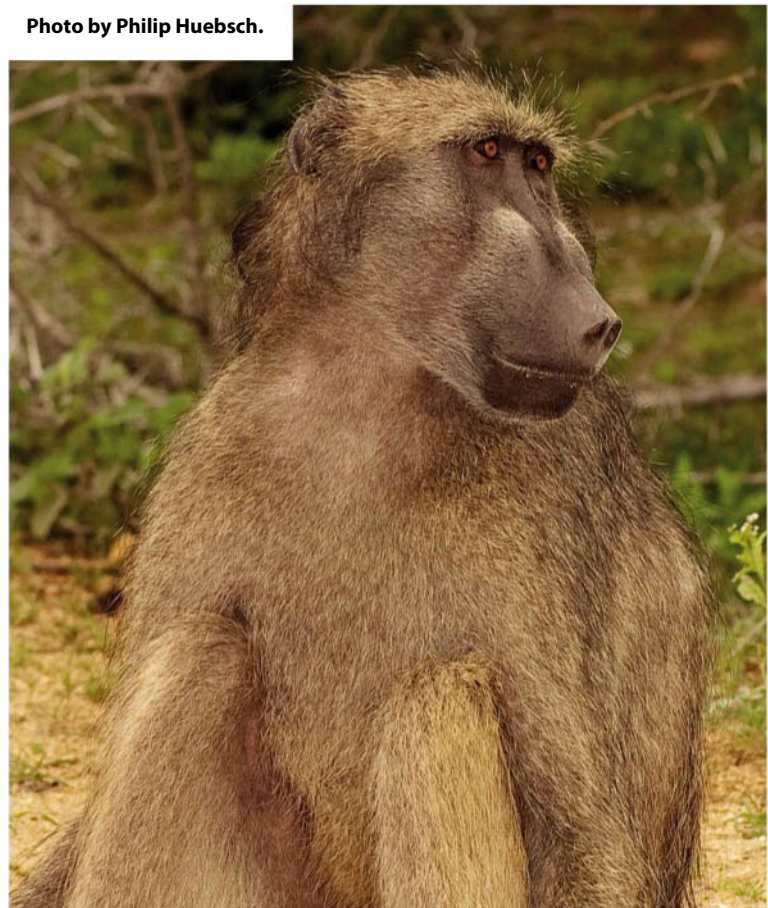
ahead. The dense maize had partially muffled the shot and the long grass hid the fallen animal. I quickly reloaded and shot another. Then they registered the danger they were in and a volley of barks and shrieks echoed back and forth and the long grass swayed violently with their frantically departing forms. The retreat was loud and prolonged. By the time my uncle arrived with the big gun the troop must have been near the farm boundary.

OVER THE YEARS I fought other battles with the baboons. Shortly before I finished high school, I was on holiday in the Mount Darwin area, where the local farmers asked me to hunt baboons. To the northwest was a new farming block which, until a year or two earlier, had been unoccupied. It was thickly forested, with numerous hilly ranges. The new farmers, many of them ex-service-men from WWII, had to develop the

farms from scratch – cut roads, build housing, stump the lands, plough, sow seed and cultivate. Only to find that after all their work, the new tobacco plants were being killed by baboons and monkeys eating the heart-shoots. This meant going to war again.

For two weeks of that school holiday I fought the farmers' battles. There was a crop guard, wise in the way of baboons, armed with a bolt-action 12-bore shotgun. The other foot-soldiers came in the form of a large pack of dogs. My weapon was a .22 Savage, a centre-fire, high velocity cartridge that was deadly. I hunted the tobacco fields in the mornings, with a Doberman in the Land Rover. Vervet monkeys forage at that time, and could be surprised in the act of damaging the plants, and the dogs would put them up into the *msasa* trees around the field. Those hunts put me off shooting monkeys for the rest of my life.

Photo by Philip Huebsch.



The baboon troops lived up on the high ridges, which were also thickly forested. We would spot their position from a distance and call the dogs up. The crop guard and I were fit for running. For the first few kilometres we walked the dogs through the trees and on to the lower slopes below the baboons' rocky castle, all the while listening to the sentry's sharp barks. When the sentry began his alarm call we turned the dogs loose. The baboons ran for it, but the dogs were faster. Several times, hand-to-hand combat took place, leaving dead on both sides, but in the end the baboons had to seek relief in the trees. That was when we decimated the baboon troop. After such contacts the troop left the area entirely. We bought dogs at two shillings per head to replace those killed.

SOMETIMES WE'D locate a baboon troop's sleeping place, usually on a cliff on the side of a hill. Baboon troops have several such sleeping places and switch from one to the other, probably according to food availability. We found such a cliff that was steep and rocky with bare, stunted and dead tree stumps sticking out of it. It was 50 metres up the ridge, and there was a small flat area directly below the cliff. The resident baboons would go to water at mid-afternoon and arrive at the sleeping place before sundown. While they were away foraging, we piled a large wagon-load of freshly-mown long grass below the cliff. By 3pm our ambush was in place.

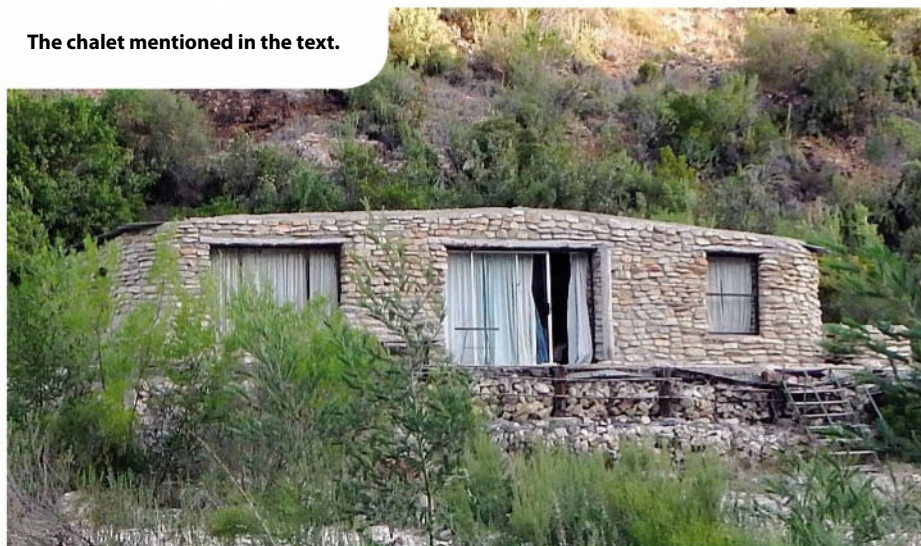
THE CROP GUARD and I lay under the pile of grass, fully covered, and the scent of the grass hid our own smell. I had swapped the Savage .22 for a 12-bore double. We both wore lamps strapped to our foreheads with battery packs on our belts. It was a long wait, and when the troop finally came, they were so close we could hear the padding of their feet. The troop quarrelled noisily, scratched and turned over rocks. There was no moon and, as is usual in Africa, a short twilight, during

which the animals settled into night spots. Then all was quiet except for the odd contented grunt.

We switched on the lights as we rose up out of the grass, and dozens of eyes reflected the targets for our heavy buckshot. Long after the reflective targets had vanished, we could still hear the noise made by the panicked troop far away over the ridge. As with the monkeys, that episode made me reluctant to shoot baboons thereafter. It was, of course, justified – either the baboons or the farmers had to go. The world of the wild animals yields before the expansion of mankind. At the time, I found I could justify it; but today I ponder the matter.

At times, my daily jog in the late afternoons took me down the main road to the bridge across the river, and the road ran through a deep cutting with a ridge on both sides of the road. The ridge was dry and covered in broken rocks of all sizes. Shortly after my burst of temper, my afternoon run was disrupted at the cutting by fist-size rocks falling around me. A large troop of baboons was up on the ridge and silently watching my progress. I was carrying my rifle by its barrel over my shoulder; that would account for the silence. As I looked up I saw several of the larger dog-baboons deliberately dislodging rocks on the steep slope. One even kicked back with his hind legs sending the

The chalet mentioned in the text.



Many years later, when I was stationed with the police at Chirundu, on the Zambezi river, I fought further skirmishes with baboons. They insisted on raiding the few houses built on an isolated hill above the big river, houses where the police and a few other government officials lived. The troops broke into and raided the kitchens many times. The game rangers frowned on shooting the looters. That emboldened these intelligent animals.

After one particularly damaging break-in, my anger boiled over and I took to the field with my issue FN 7.62. It took two shots and two dead to banish the marauders for many months.

rock into the air for a short distance. Revenge? I don't know. Transferring the rifle to both hands sent them scampering out of sight over the ridge.

DOWN ON THE Kouga river the chalet is built from local stone and has a tin roof. The roof nails have big rubber washers to waterproof them. The baboons come calling, and pull the nails out to chew on the rubber washers. Then they spit the washers out. Maybe the rubber looks edible. The chalet is always securely closed when not in use. The baboons are only in danger when they leave the mountains and go down to the gardens and orchards. 

Italian Italyco

by PHILLIP HAYES

NEW FOR THIS year from Italian gun-maker, Fausti, among other offerings is the Italyco range of shotguns. An example of one of these fine guns can be seen on our cover. These guns are fully tailor-made and feature custom stock dimensions and specifications.

According to Fausti this range is manufactured in the same spirit as the weapons built for the Roman gladiators as a tribute to Italian gun making excellence through history. Fausti describes the Italyco concept as "the antique in the future". It is not just a sporting over-and-under shotgun for passionate shooters and collectors, but a tribute to a renewed Italian concept of beauty. Fausti says that the world is becoming too global and standardized, taking beauty away from any daily tool. The challenge is to maintain creativity and craftsmanship, something that is displayed in these guns.

The Italyco is available in traditional boxlock configuration or with long and low side-plates. The smooth-bore version is built on a round-body action and produced in most traditional hunting calibres. The double rifle is available in most popular calibres for driven hunting.

The SLX-model (with side-plates) is one of the very few examples of a round body over-and-under in the world.

Both versions of the Italyco come with half pistol grip stocks fitted with ebony or steel caps. Top grade blanks in extra select Turkish or Circassia walnut with the right grain and contrasts of colour are turned into custom stocks by hand, oil polished and finely chequered. The fore-end catch is an example of fine gunmaking with an exceptional wood-to-metal finish.



The wood-to-metal fit is excellent as can be seen on the release mechanism on the fore-end.

The hand engraving is intentionally simple yet elegant and each gun is signed by the artist. The Italyco is produced in a coin finish or colour case-hardened using a traditional bone-and-charcoal technique. This is an ancient method of case-hardening where the iron is packed in a mixture of

The Italyco SLX with side-plates.

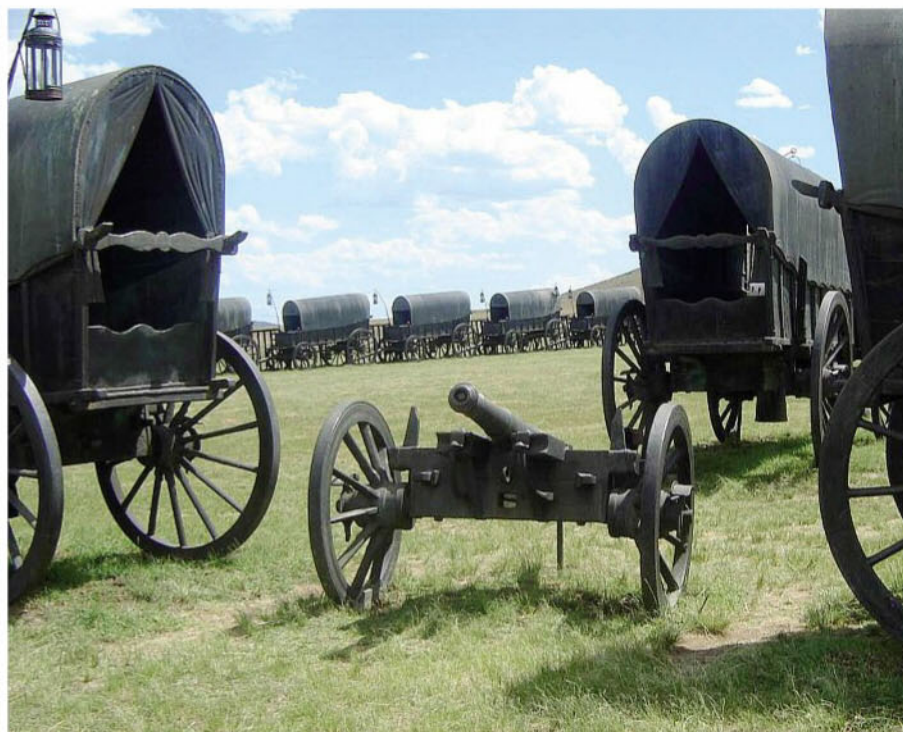
ground bone and charcoal and heated. The marbling and the 'flames of colour' produced on the steel in this way make each gun unique. One can choose between fixed chokes and choke tubes and each gun is tested to ensure that the chokes deliver consistent patterns.

PRECISION CNC milling is used and complimented by handcrafting in for example the wood-to-metal fit. The guns are fitted with ejectors and a selective single trigger. The patented four-locks system is unique to these guns. The four locking points substantially extend the life-cycle and overall reliability of this model. Each Italyco is also supplied in a custom case unique to each individual gun.

For more information contact Entramarc, the Fausti agent in South Africa, on 011-704-6708. 



A view of the grip cap.



A replica of Pretorius's Koperstuk at the Blood River Monument.

Koperstuk

The cannon that fought Zulu, Brit and Boer

by **MC HEUNIS**

ONE OF THE MOST prominent names in South African history is that of Voortrekker leader Andries Pretorius. Interestingly, he owned a small bronze cannon referred to as the *Koperstuk* (Copper Piece) which accompanied him on many adventures.

It is unlikely we will ever know where Koperstuk was cast or used prior to its arrival in South Africa. Pretorius bought the cannon for 500 Rijksdaalders from a merchant ship in the Cape. We know it was a bronze gun, meaning it was cast from an alloy of copper and tin (often incorrectly called brass, which is an alloy of copper and zinc). One eye witness described it as a 3½ - 4 foot (1067

to 1219mm) long piece with a bore of around 2½ inches (64mm). This would make it a 1½ or 2 pounder, meaning that it fired a solid iron ball weighing 1½ or 2lb (680 or 907g).

The second half of 1838 found the morale of the Natal Voortrekkers at an all-time low. Their leader had been murdered and they were constantly awaiting more devastating attacks from Dingane's mighty Zulu army. On 22 November 1838 Pretorius arrived at the Voortrekker laager on the Klein Tugela river (near the present Colenso) with his Koperstuk cannon. He immediately took control and within a few weeks transformed the Voortrek-

ker tactics from defensive to offensive. He assembled a commando of the fittest men with two cannons to take the fight to the Zulus.

The commando travelled into Zululand and by mid-December was in the region of the Ncome river. Several mounted patrols were on the lookout for the Zulu *impi* and when they finally spotted them on 15 December, they set up a defensive wagon laager. Various scouts outside the laager warned of the approaching enemy by firing shots with one of the cannon. Andries Pretorius with 360 men and his small gun immediately moved out to meet the Zulus.

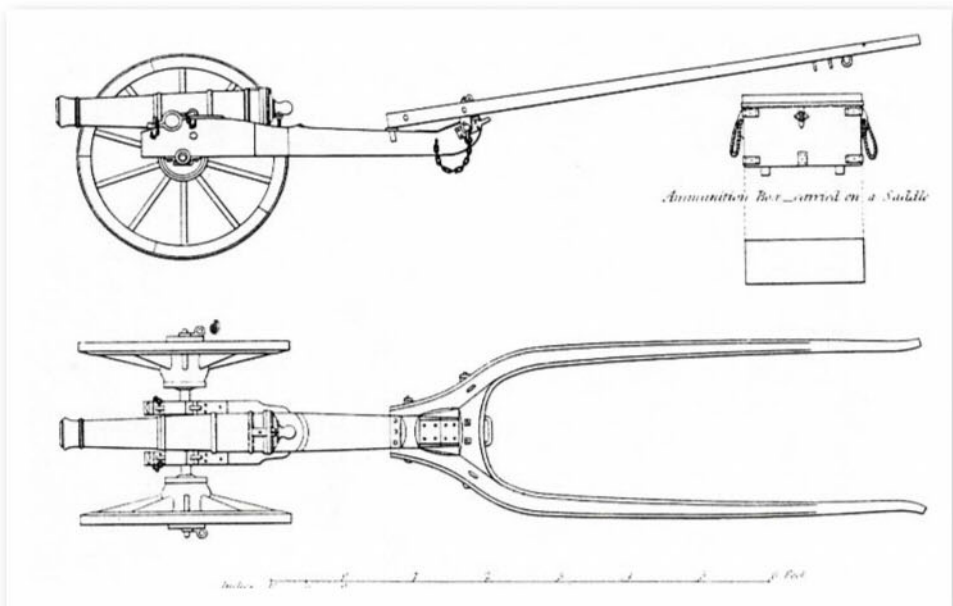
The next day the historic Battle of Blood River took place. As part of his defences Pretorius fired his two guns through openings in the laager. Koperstuk was operated by a man named Gissing, while the other gun, *Ouwe Griet*, was manned by Jan Joubert. The first two waves of closely-packed young Zulu warriors were successfully warded off by the use of *lopers* (buck shot) from the *bobbejaanbout* muskets and *skroot* (home-made case shot) from the cannon.

However, the young Zulu attackers quickly learned from their mistake and

A typical light gun-carriage from the early 19th century.

opened up their formations. Pretorius ordered one cannon to fire solid shot at the older Zulu regiments that were watching the fight from across the river. After two shots the enraged older regiments started swarming over the river to join the fight. Pushing up against the younger warriors, the Zulu ranks quickly filled up again and the Voortrekkers' ammunition regained its effectiveness. With the Zulu army convincingly beaten at the laager the Voortrekkers sent out a mounted commando causing the impi to fall back in disarray, leaving the Ncome river red with the blood of the dead and wounded.

By Christmas 1838, Andries Pretorius had reached King Dingane's deserted kraal. On 27 December he decided to move out with a commando and one cannon to try to recover some



After the defeat of Dingane, Pretorius returned to farming outside Pietermaritzburg. The peace was short-lived; early in May 1842 a British military force under Captain TC Smith arrived at Port Natal (Durban) to annex the harbour for the British Crown. After constructing an earthen fortified camp outside Port Natal, Smith rode to the harbour, took down the Voortrekker flag and replaced it with the Union Jack. The Voortrekkers were not amused and soon Pretorius and a commando of Boers with their two old cannons assembled at the small settlement of Congela close to Port Natal.

ON THE NIGHT of 24 May 1842 Smith launched a surprise night attack on Congela, but was beaten back with heavy losses. Pretorius pushed forward after the fleeing British and attacked their fort. Unable to take the well-protected camp, the Boers decided to lay siege to it. During the four-week long siege they bombarded the camp with about six guns, some captured from the British, plus *Ouwe Griet* and of course *Koperstuk*, in all firing some 651 shots. When their ammunition sup-

ply started to dwindle, the Boers manufactured round shot for their cannon by breaking up the anchor chain of one of the vessels in the harbour and casting lead around the links.

On 24 June a British relief force under Colonel AJ Cloete arrived at Port Natal aboard the HMS Southampton and the Conch. On the 26th the Southampton fired a broadside on the Boers guarding the beach, while British troops from the Conch

MW Pretorius around 1850 (Potchefstroom museum).



Andries Pretorius in 1838, as depicted by the French naturalist, Adulphe Delegorgue (Potchefstroom museum).

of the captured Boer cattle. Because the terrain prohibited transportation of their "*kleine kanon*" (small canon) they left it under guard on a mountain. It was later returned to the laager.





The battle of Laing's Nek as illustrated by a British newspaper artist.

landed. Although under fire from Pretorius' men on the beach and one cannon (mounted on a heap of sand) the landing troops easily managed to force the Boers to retreat and to lift the siege.

A PEACE TREATY was signed between the Voortrekker Volksraad and the British at Pietermaritzburg. Item 2 of the treaty stated that the Boers would hand over all cannons that were captured, as well as others in their possession, with the ammunition and supplies. Pretorius personally compiled the following list: one 18-pounder captured at The Point, two 6-pounders captured at Congela, two 4-pounders taken from the Mazeppa, one 4-pounder that was unserviceable, a 3-pounder and one unserviceable 1-pounder. Pretorius also mentioned that he had a small 1½ or 2-pounder bronze gun on his farm.

After Britain formally annexed the Voortrekker Republic in 1845, two-thirds of the Boers moved to the interior. Pretorius also moved, taking with him his little bronze gun, to the

farm Grootplaats at the foot of the Magaliesberg.

In 1848 things were stirring in *Trans Oranje* after Britain also annexed this Voortrekker area, and the local Boers turned to Pretorius for help. He assembled a commando and, taking Koperstuk along, crossed the Vaal river. Major Henry Warden, the British resident at Bloemfontein, learned of the approaching force and fled, leaving Pretorius to enter the town unopposed on 20 July.

IN RESPONSE, Sir Harry Smith, the Cape's High Commissioner, invaded the Orange River Sovereignty with an artillery-supported force. Pretorius chose Boomplaats, south of today's Edenburg, to await Smith's arrival. On 29 August 1848, the two groups clashed, and Pretorius was forced from the field after some over-eager burghers fired too early and gave away his carefully laid trap. The little 2-pounder Koperstuk, manned by MS Knuth, fired a few shots, but was soon silenced by three British 6-pound field-guns. Some sources state that a

piece was knocked off her muzzle during the battle. After Boomplaats, Pretorius and his little cannon returned to the Transvaal.

IN 1851 THE Orange River Sovereignty Boers, this time supported by the Basotho chief Moshoeshe, again asked Pretorius to come to their aid. Pretorius announced his intention of crossing the Vaal to restore order in the Sovereignty. The British, who had already decided to abandon all land north of the Orange, were now forced to act quickly. They gave the Transvaal Boers independence and withdrew the 2000 pound reward they had placed on Pretorius' head after Boomplaats. On 17 January 1852, Pretorius met the British commissioners near the Sand river and they concluded the convention for the independence of the Transvaal.

AFTER A FEW years of peace, in August 1852, Pretorius was again called out on commando, this time against the Tswana chief Sechele. Doubtless, he took Koperstuk along, but during this campaign the ageing Pretorius fell sick and never fully recovered; he died in July 1853. His place was filled by his eldest son, MW Pretorius, who inherited his father's little cannon and became the first President of the Transvaal.

Within the Transvaal, a civil war loomed between Paul Kruger's *Staatspartij* and Stephanus Schoeman's *Volkspartij*. This time it was against neither Zulu warriors nor English soldiers that the little Koperstuk was used, but fellow Boers as the two parties took up arms and clashed outside Potchefstroom on 7 October 1862.

KRUGER'S *Staatsleër* used the bronze Koperstuk and an iron gun. One gun was placed on a nearby hill to cover the town market square and magistrate's office. The *Staatsleër* opened fire and Schoeman's *Volksleër* replied with artillery and rifle fire. The *Staatsleër's* third shot disabled one of Schoeman's pieces, but sporadic rifle

and cannon fire continued until dark. Neither side suffered much damage from the light guns.

The next day MW Pretorius arrived to try and resolve the situation. He sided with Schoeman and wrote a letter to Kruger in which he requested that the "metal cannon" (gun metal being another name for bronze) belonging to him and on loan to the State, should be returned to him immediately. He further wrote that the gun, which he and his father had used "in defence of the freedom of our nation" was currently being used against the women and children of Potchefstroom. By then more than 300 cannon balls had already been fired into the town.

AFTER SCHOEMAN and Kruger had made peace, Frans Smit was appointed cannon-commandant of the Transvaal, responsible for the care of the state's artillery pieces which, until 1874, were housed on his farm Schurveberg near Pretoria. The little bronze Koperstuk probably remained at Grootplaats during this period, until MW Pretorius gave it to his nephew, Commandant CD Pretorius of Lydenburg. CD Pretorius later moved to Middelburg where the gun was stored in his attic.

In 1877, during a "friendly" visit to Pretoria, Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed the Transvaal for Britain. The Transvaal Boers were unhappy and petitioned, negotiated and even sent delegates to England to try to have the annexation reversed. When all peace-

ful means had failed, they decided to take up arms.

As the British had seized the Transvaal Boers' only professional artillery unit comprising their more modern pieces, the Boers had to make do with the few antique muzzle-loading cannon they had hidden away after the annexation. Once again, the little Koperstuk appeared and in January 1881 saw action against General Colley's expeditionary forces at the Battle of Laings Nek, manned by Kaptein Barend Pelser, later CO of the Transvaal *Staatsartillerie*. On the instructions of Commandant CD Pretorius, the little gun had been repaired and solid shot was cast for it by a certain H Groenewald. It is doubtful whether this small piece would have played anything more than a morale-boosting role during the battle. It was said to have jumped into the air every time it was fired.

AFTER THE BOER victory at Majuba in February 1881, the little bronze gun was returned to Middelburg. In 1883, her retirement was once again interrupted when she accompanied the Middelburgers to Mapochsland, but because she was not used during this, her final campaign her name was changed to *Weeskind* (Orphan). She was retired to Middelburg and placed in the care of Landdrost Gert du Toit, to be occasionally fired for the Day of the Vow salute or when Oom Paul's birthday was celebrated.

The little copper gun would probably still be there today, were it not for the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in 1899. In July 1900, General French occupied Middelburg and one source mentions that the little antique Koperstuk was finally silenced by a lethal charge of dynamite – a sad ending for an old veteran. But was it...? The British were unsurpassed at record-keeping. British Army records of captured Boer guns, preserved at the Public Records Office in Kew, London, make no mention of a cannon "captured" or destroyed at Middelburg.

HOWEVER, ONE LIST of Boer guns, dated January 1904, mentions that they had two trophy "2-pr S.B. Bronze" Boer guns in store for which carriages had to be found. Another list of allotted trophy guns mentions that a 2-pr bronze gun was delivered to the General Officer Commanding the 6th Division at Devonport in July 1904, while a second 2-pr, with the serial number 133, was also sent to the Chief Ordnance Officer at an unreadable location. So it seems quite possible that the little Koperstuk survived the 1899-1902 war and was sent to Britain as a war trophy. Attempts during the 1930s to find it and return it to the Transvaal for the Great Trek centenary were unsuccessful.

We can still hope that one day this historic South African heirloom will be found and returned to our land.

Author's sources available on request. 

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Nightcap? Lucky Cap? Madcap?

by NEIL HARMSE



Left: The author's gentlemanly attire. Right: The hat and snake man CJP Ionides.

WHEN IT COMES to outdoorsmen (sorry ladies – this is a man thing), have you ever wondered what it is that sets us apart from one another? I am particularly referring to the older generation of hunters, fishermen, bird-watchers and the like – what it is that gives us each a characteristic, individual look?

Well, I have discovered that it's because, over the years, we have become attached to a dirty, smelly old friend that we just cannot tear ourselves away from.

I never realised this until the start of this year's bird hunting season, when John Brelsford, my old hunting and fishing buddy, turned up for the first shoot of the season. At first I could not put my finger on why he looked so different, and then it struck me... he was wearing a brand new straw hat!

John's normal headgear was a horrible, tattered old straw hat with a broad brim, a few shotgun pellet holes through it, and splotched with some green paint for camouflage. Without this familiar head apparel he just wasn't the same old buddy. He had changed overnight.

FOR LONG-TIME readers familiar with the hunting stories in *Magnum*, consider the many tales by Geoff Wainwright, and think about the photos of Geoff with that decrepit, floppy felt hat that has become his trademark. Go back a bit further, and think about that famous game ranger and herpetologist of the 1930s to 50s era, CJP Ionides or "Iodine" the Snake Man. He sported the most dilapidated, shapeless and grimy felt dome on his head – a trademark that made him instantly recognisable.

Then it suddenly dawned on me that I, too, have become eccentric about my favourite choice of head-gear. My hat started off as a gentleman's Velour felt hat that was very fashionable in the 1950s. This hat belonged to a favourite uncle, and on his passing, it found its way into my possession. Over the years it has become such an old friend that I cannot imagine myself outdoors without it perched on my head.

THE HAT AND I have travelled many wilderness trails together, shared many adventures. It has a gash in the crown where an angry lioness took a swipe at it when I threw it at her... but it turned her charge!

On cold winter mornings in the veld, I have held the hat over a campfire to warm it up before putting it on my head – the interior leather band shows the

burns and scorches of this habit. It has also been used many times as a water-bowl for my pointers to drink out of on a hot day when no dam or river was nearby. Together we have shared sun, rain, sleet, hail and dust storms. Many times it has shaded my face when I was taking a mid-day snooze under a tree, and served as a pillow when I've been sleeping out under the stars on a wilderness trail. My hat has become a dirty, smelly old friend!

I HAVE BEEN admonished by the Lady of the House who insists that the hat should stay outside with the dogs as such a thing does not belong inside a home. However, as a compromise, it now has pride of place on a hat and coat rack at the kitchen door, demonstrating its status over the other, less-used pieces of headgear which have yet to gain character – if ever they will.

It saddens me to think that most of the young outdoorsmen of today will never experience the bond that many of us 'oldies'

Below: Gregor Woods with his hat that has become something of a signature.

have shared with our smelly old friends. Today the trend is to step out with a fancy branded cap, sometimes even worn with the peak to the back, or fashionable new outdoor creations which make really great headgear, comfortable

Right: Geoff Wainwright with his floppy 'hat'.

Below: The Fletcher Jamieson 'look'.



Well, Gregor bought his German-made hat from Rosenthal's gun shop in Windhoek in 1975. He described it as the most comfortable hat he has ever worn; it has a short, soft peak which doesn't interfere with the rifle scope, and does not cause the cap to blow off in the wind. It is light and cool, and absorbs perspiration, allowing it to evaporate as he walks. It folds flat and can be stuffed in a pocket, packed in a suitcase or folded up to use as a padded rifle rest.

The hat can also be used to lift the hot cast iron lid off a three-legged potjie on the fire. It has flaps on the sides and back that can be lowered as protection against the sun. Truly a MacGyver hat.

ANOTHER unmistakable character due to his hat was big game hunter Fletcher Jamieson, the Rhodesian elephant hunter who took all the photos that were used in Pondoro Taylor's book *African Rifles & Cartridges*.

He always wore a wide-brimmed hat with the brim turned up in front. The late Brian Marsh wrote about Jamieson and his .500 Jeffery in *Magnum* (August 2003). In a caption of a photograph of Jamieson in the article he refers to "the Fletcher Jamieson 'look' for which he became famous – hat turned up in the front and sleeves removed from his bush jacket".

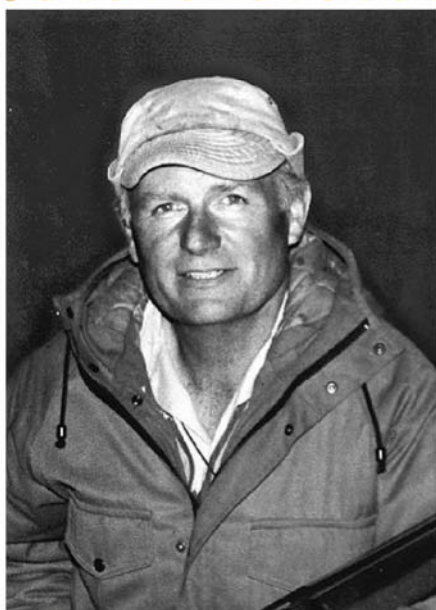
GREGOR WOODS recalls Marsh telling him that Jamieson wore his hat this way because the lowered brim around the sides and back acted as elephant's ears, or kudu ears, catching the faintest sounds in the bush ahead. **Editor** 



and practical, but have much to go through before they gain that character needed to distinguish one wearer from another.

Give a thought to your friends and their headgear. Think of your own. Do you have a favourite hat that sets you apart from others? If not, you are missing out on a special bond that could develop over many years of shared experiences.

► *Magnum's* Gregor Woods is one of those easily recognized when hunting, due to his khaki cotton cap. A subscriber once wrote to *Magnum* wanting to know, "What is the story with the hat? Does he also sleep with it on? Is it his lucky hat?"



Big Cat 'Double'

by **JOHN COLEMAN**

IT IS ALMOST unheard of to find a lion and a leopard together unless the lion happens to have caught the leopard and killed it. Leopards usually keep as far away from lions as possible.

During the mid-1960s, I was on safari in Botswana with a client named Eric who wanted to bag the "Big Four", his priorities being lion and leopard. We started out in the Hunters' Africa camp near the Savuti channel in the Chobe/Linyanti river area, as this was excellent habitat for both big cat species. I met Eric at the Victoria Falls airstrip in the morning and we drove through to Kazungula on the rutted, sandy track, then on through Kasane, Serondellas and Kachikau, avoiding herds of elephant, past the Ghogha hills, arriving in camp that evening, tired and sweaty.

WE SPENT the next few days looking for lion and leopard sign, while also keeping an eye out for buffalo and elephant. On the fourth day we were driving slowly along a track near the river, when my tracker Luka tapped on the roof. "There are some fresh tracks of a few buffalo bulls, Baba," he said, so we climbed out to have a look. About ten big bulls had crossed the road and the dung was still warm, so I decided to follow, hoping to get a good one – which would also provide a lion bait. "Load your .375 with 300gr solids," I told Eric, then we set off on the spoor.

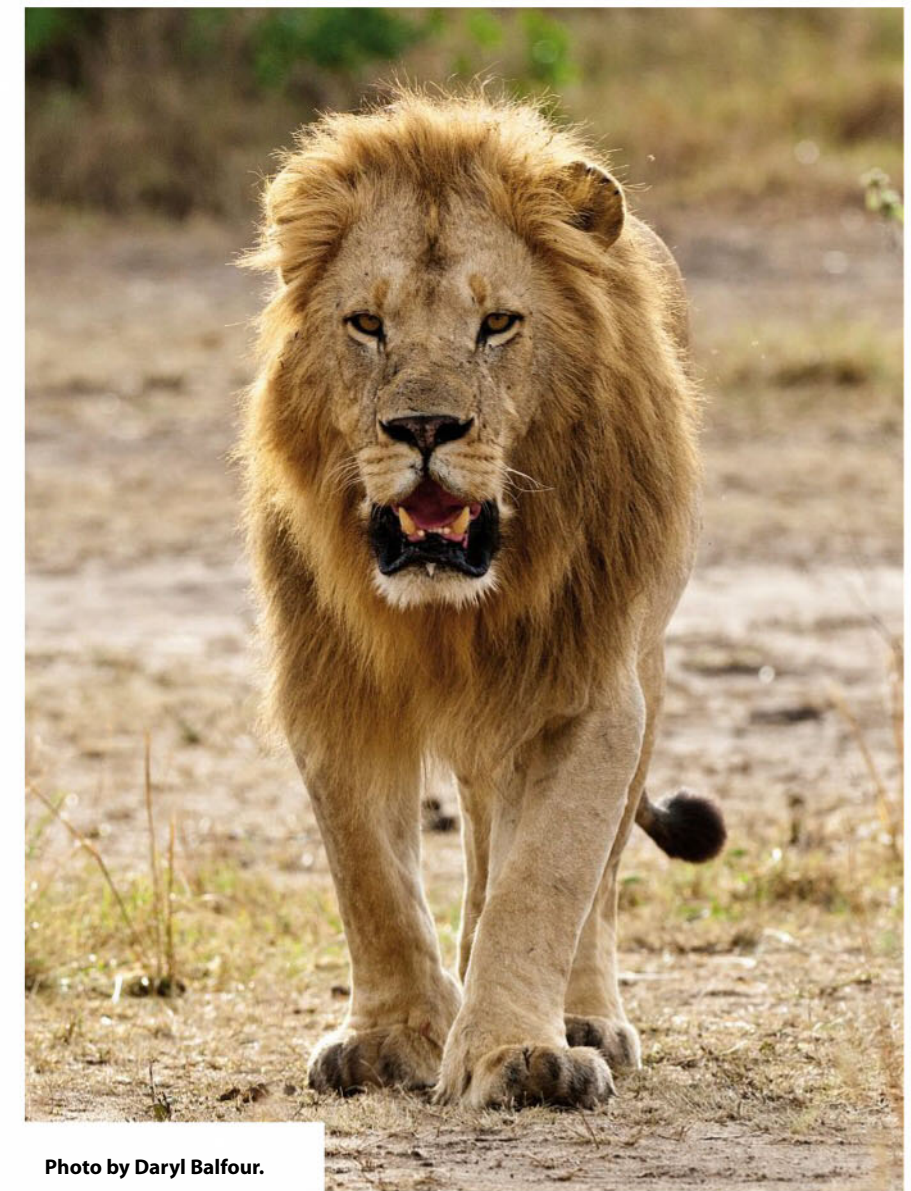


Photo by Daryl Balfour.

The tracks led us into some scrub mopane, where the buffalo started feeding on the leaves and other shrubs. They were meandering about, making it difficult for us to remain downwind of them. Minutes later the slight breeze carried our scent to them and they took off with a crowd of oxpeckers circling above them. "Okay, let's give them ten minutes and then try to circle around them," I said. After a wait, we set off at a fairly fast pace. Soon Luka held up his hand. "Baba, I can hear the birds over towards those big teak trees," he whispered. Stopping to listen, I heard the *chirrr* of the oxpeckers. The darned things had seen us. "Keep still

and wait; they may settle down," I whispered. We sat down, and shortly the birds stopped their warning calls. I heard the occasional deep snort of a buffalo. They were not alarmed and started moving slowly along, apparently feeding. I beckoned to Eric and we stalked slowly towards them.

SUDDENLY THE head and shoulders of a big bull emerged from the low scrub. He just stood there, staring at us in surprise a few yards away. "Shoot him in the chest," I whispered, keeping my eyes on the bull. The shot rang out; the huge beast reared back and took off to our right, stampeding the others. "Hold



Photo by Daryl Balfour.

it, give him a few minutes and listen for the death bellow," I said. Soon we heard the mournful bellow about thirty paces away and walked slowly towards the sound. It went quiet, meaning that the bull was probably dead, but we stayed alert, just in case. I spotted the dark shape of the buffalo lying on its side; we stood and watched, but there was no movement other than from an oxpecker on its back, glaring accusingly at us and uttering its *chirrr* cry. "He's dead; congratulations," I said, shaking Eric's hand. It was a pretty good trophy with a heavy boss and wide, curving horns.

The trackers skinned the animal while I went to fetch the Land Rover.

We cut the carcass in half and managed to load it after much battling and cursing. On the way back to camp we came across the spoor of a pride of lions with a large male among them, so we hung the front half of the buffalo carcass from a convenient tree, then drove on to camp.

The next day we checked the lion bait, but the only tracks were those of a couple of hyena that had walked back and forth below the hanging meat. We'd hung it too high for them to feed on, but they had taken a few bites out of it by jumping up. During the next two days I got Eric to shoot another buffalo and a zebra, whose carcasses we also hung as bait, and

I hung two impala elsewhere in likely leopard spots. No cats came in to any of the baits, but a couple of days later we found fresh spoor of the pride with the big male heading in the direction of the river, so we took up the trail.

THERE WAS A lot of grass and the going was fairly slow, but Luka just kept going, not losing the tracks, even on hard ground with patches of mopane. As always, I could only marvel at this man's tracking ability. He was in a class of his own, even among his Bushmen peers. The sun was getting hot and the going was hard. Eric was battling along, swigging constantly from the water josack, but was not about to give up. We tracked over sand, hard ground, through patches of teak forest and mopane scrub, hoping to find the pride lying in the shade, but no luck. They seemed to have the Chobe river in mind as their destination, and just kept going.

I DON'T USE a rifle sling, as it can snag on things when you least want it to, so I always carry my .458 over my shoulder, muzzle forward. It was starting to feel like lead, so I kept switching it from one shoulder to the other. I could see that Eric was also feeling the weight of his .375, even though he slung it from a shoulder strap. We were getting close to the river and the vegetation was becoming thicker. Big trees were dotted around with quite a lot of thick undergrowth in patches. I spotted a big tree with a dense umbrella-growth of creepers on top, so we headed for it to sit in its shade for a while. When we were about thirty paces from the tree, we suddenly heard several deep, thunderous grunts and the pride of lions jumped up and took off in all directions. I saw the big male and shouted to Eric, "Shoot it!" Taken by surprise, he fumbled around trying to get the rifle sling off his shoulder and over his head. Fortunately, the lion stopped and turned broadside giving Eric time to get the rifle aligned. The 300gr Nosler partition bullet hit it square on the shoulder and it dropped, kicking.

I was about to congratulate Eric, when Luka grabbed me by the shoulder and pointed up into the tree. There was a big leopard, about to take off from a branch. "Shoot it!" I hissed. Eric chambered a round and fired hastily, fortunately hitting the big cat in the chest. It let out a few grunts as it leaped out of the tree and disappeared into the grass. "Keep still and listen," I whispered, and we all stood watching the grass. There was no movement or sound of an animal running through grass.

WE WAITED a few minutes, then Luka and I walked over to where the leopard had disappeared. "Baba, there is plenty of blood from the lungs; it will die soon, but we must be careful," he whispered. I beckoned Eric over and told him to keep close behind and to one side, so that he could get off a shot if necessary. Then we moved cautiously along the blood trail into

the grass. I ensured that my .458 was loaded with the safety off. Luka suddenly stopped. "Listen," he whispered. I could hear a rasping, bubbly sound and realised that it was the leopard only about ten paces ahead, trying to breathe. "Stand still, but be ready," I said, beckoning Eric to stand beside me. We both stood with rifles ready. The bubbling sounds got fainter then stopped. "Okay, I think he's dead, but be ready. Let's go slowly in," I told Eric. Gingerly we stalked forward, listening for the enraged grunts of a charging leopard, but all was quiet.

AS WE APPROACHED a small bush, I saw the spotted tail and stopped, rifle aimed. There was no movement or sound. We watched tensely for a couple of minutes, but there was still no movement. I picked up a small stick and threw it, hitting the tail. There was no reaction, and I realised with relief that it was dead.

After the usual delighted congratulations we picked up the leopard and carried it out, laying it next to the body of the lion. Eric suddenly grabbed me in a bearhug. "John, I got a lion and a leopard with a double," he yelled, jumping up and down with delight. I must say, this was the only time that I have ever heard of this happening.

THE LEOPARD had been treed by the lions and was lying up in the leafy branches of the creeper high in the tree, waiting for them to lose interest and leave. Fortunately for us, he was reluctant to leave before he was sure the lions had left. It just wasn't his lucky day.

I was so chuffed about getting the two cats that it was only after we'd got back to camp that I realised I had left my .458 leaning on the "umbrella" tree. I had to back-track with Luka for about ten kilometres the next day and, fortunately, it was still there, leaning against the tree. 📷

GALLERY

Laurie Byerley

MY REQUEST in *Magnum* of November 2014 for information on Laurie Byerley, a one-armed big-game hunter of the early 20th century, delivered some interesting results. As feared this old character has taken most of his life's stories with him to the grave. There are too many gaps to form a true biography but there are tantalizing glimpses OF how he lived. My appreciation goes to his daughter, Annie of Bulawayo, who tried hard to gather information for me.

Born in 1897 in Southern Rhodesia he lived and helped his father on the latter's gold mine near Bulawayo. At the age of eight he had his left arm shot off at the elbow by a crazed mine worker. This handicap did not deter him from his love of hunting. He hunted mainly around Bulawayo and the big five further north near Tjolutjo and Wankie. It does not appear that



he was employed professionally as a 'white-hunter' or a cropper, but hunted purely for his own pleasure.

I remember an incident in which he was knocked over by a wounded, charging elephant and was saved by

his fox terrier. The dog bit at the animal's heels, distracting it and gave Laurie a chance to grab his fallen rifle and finish it off. His daughter has also seen scars on his back and shoulders, the result of an attack by a leopard. Undoubtedly, this was a wounded animal that got to the hunter first.

I have seen leopard and lion skins, 100lb elephant tusks, together with huge kudu, buffalo and other horns, in his wife's house (not his sister's, as I had first thought) during a visit to Bulawayo in 1966.

All these trophies were donated to the Natural History Museum in Bulawayo. My attempts to contact the curator for more info and photos have been unsuccessful. Annie also drew a blank when visiting there.

Laurie possessed an English double rifle and shot this using the stump of his left arm as a rest. The calibre and make are unfortunately unknown.

continued on page 69 ►

Rameron Pigeon

Columba arquatrix

by **ANDRÉ GROBLER**



Photo from *Gamebird Shooting in Southern Africa* by Colin Vary.

THE RAMERON pigeon (Afrikaans: *Geelbekbosduif*) is the largest of all pigeons found in South Africa and like the rock pigeon, challenging to shoot. Unlike rockies, however, they are more difficult to find due to their forest habitat.

Ramerons, also called the African olive pigeon, are found in the woodlands and forests of eastern and southern Africa from the Cape to Ethiopia. Populations are also found in western Angola, south-western Saudi Arabia and northern Yemen. In southern Africa they keep inland of the coastal forests that stretch from the Western Cape to Mozambique. They frequent the wood-

lands, montane forests and plantations of KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and eastern Zimbabwe.

RAMERONS HAVE bright yellow bills, legs and feet. They are dark grey to pale purple, with white speckles on the lower breast and on top of the wings. They have a lighter grey crown on the head above the eyes. The exposed skin around the eyes is bright yellow. The feathers on the wings and tail darken towards the ends. Ramerons are slightly bigger than rock pigeons.

They eat berries, fruits and seeds. Depending on the availability of forest

fruits they will eat grain from crops near their roosting places. Ramerons fly in flocks of 5 to 10 birds. They do not stay permanently in one area, but their numbers can increase in some areas when food is bountiful. Large flocks have been recorded in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape where agricultural fields are close to forests.

RAMERONS FLY mostly during the morning and late afternoon. They fly high and fast and are easily mistaken for rock pigeons. They keep to a straight flight-path between their roosts and feeding grounds. Ramerons are mostly shot when they fly from one forest patch to the next in search of food in trees. The best opportunities they offer the wingshooter are when they descend to their feeding places, which can be a lane of indigenous forest fruit trees, berry bushes or a grain field. If they are feeding on crops, establish the flight path and stand in cover directly beneath the flight path at the edges of the feeding area. Ramerons make for good sport. Though big, they can swerve easily in mid-air if they spot you. Overall, however, they do not have the aerobatic skills of the rock pigeon.

IF YOU PLAN on shooting Ramerons, first contact the relevant conservation authority in the province. Find out what the legal requirements are in that province, for example the specific shooting season dates, bag limits, whether a hunting license or permit is needed etc. Use No 5 or 6 shot and as always, pick up all birds and empty cartridge cases. 



.30-06 calibre rifle built by Natal Gun Company. The .30-06 case is versatile and can hold charges and bullets for most hunting needs.

A Case for Accuracy

by **ROGER INGLE**

AT TIMES, listening to conversations among shooters, you might hear a particular cartridge being praised for its inherent or intrinsic accuracy. (Of course, in such arguments, an inherently accurate *rifle* is assumed.) This might be followed by a rebuttal by others saying that, excluding antiquated designs, choosing a given cartridge has little to do with enhanced accuracy.

This is true if you are comparing 'apples with apples' but the fact is, there are important aspects of some specialised cartridge case and bullet designs that contribute much to a cartridge's ability to attain the super-precision necessary to be competitive in, for instance, bench-rest competitions. But, the counter argument holds some truth for almost all the other shooting sports where other criteria have to be met.

A good analogy is the comparison of a Formula One racing car with a road-going sports car. While the former will win races, it will be unsuit-

able for the numerous requirements for everyday road use. So it is with ammunition. Of course the design and quality of the bullets are important but in this instance we will focus on the cartridge case. This is where most of the divergence in styles occurs. That a good cartridge case demands many difficult engineering compromises is evident from the numerous 'classics' and wildcats we see.

The following aspects are important for accuracy.

Combustion: A decisive challenge is to get the propellant to burn consistently for each shot and also at a specific rate to produce the correct form for the gas-pressure-over-time curve. While the formulation of a propellant to achieve this is a chemist's task, the cartridge case design also plays a role; in particular the shape and size of the combustion chamber. The combustion section should not be confused with the cartridge overall length (COL). It is just the section containing

the propellant and there are a number of requirements influencing its design.

Capacity: The capacity must hold the powder charge without leaving too large a void behind the bullet or, conversely, excessive powder compaction.

The aspect ratio: The aspect ratio of the combustion section in a cartridge case is the length of the chamber holding the propellant over the mean diameter of the same. The aspect ratio should not be confused with the length of the cartridge case, its size or its capacity. It is simply a ratio and it plays an important role in the way a propellant burns.

A 6mm PPC cartridge has a ratio of only 2.3:1. The short design is to optimise the powder burn pattern for a very fast, small bullet. It also gives the cartridge a large, steep shoulder which offers a precise seating index in the barrel chamber. While the 6mm PPC features are chosen to meet the special demands of bench-rest shoot-



ing, the longer .30-06 cartridge for example, with its 4:1 ratio, is a typical 'thirty-calibre' being versatile and suitable to hold the charges and bullets for most hunting needs.

Like the automotive analogy above, an engine designer will have to choose the piston bore-to-stroke ratio and other parameters for a specific application. There are two undesirable

consequences in choosing a design with a very large aspect ratio.

While popular in double rifles and falling block actions, long, straight-walled cartridges are unusable in the limited length of bolt-action receivers and semi-automatic weapons. Also, the long flame-travel in the combustion chamber may lead to complicated burning patterns with some powders. This is due to the powder near the front, behind the bullet, being subjected to kinetic shock during the burn process.

On the other hand, very short cartridges with a large capacity may require reductions to the neck/mouth which are too steep, also causing combustion problems and some fabricating difficulties.

The profile: Many early calibres like the .577 Snider, the .45-70, the .450/3¼" BPE and the .400 Purdey 3" had near-cylindrical forms like most handgun cartridges today. Long, cylindrical cartridges were easily accommodated in double rifles and those with falling block actions. However, it was



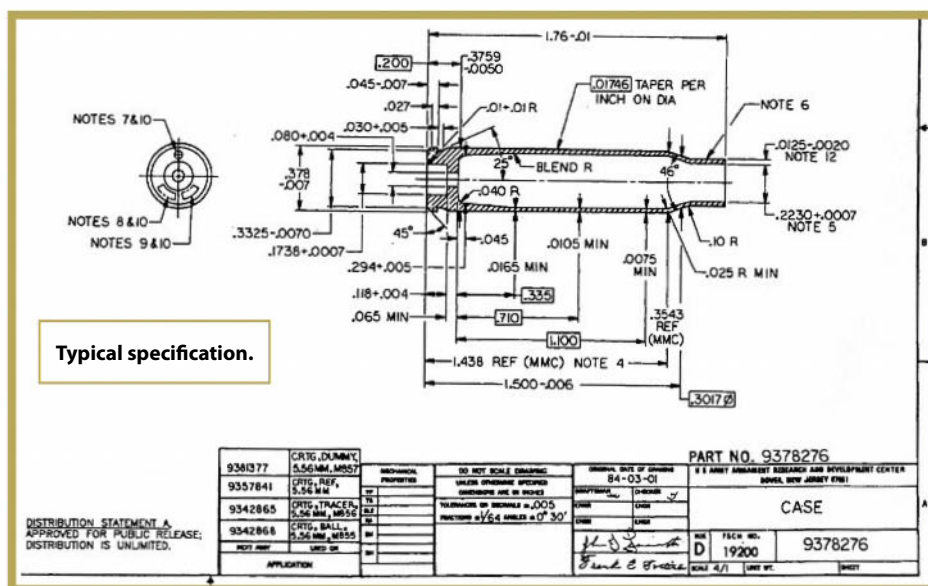
The near-cylindrical .450/3¼" BPE cartridge.

necessary to shorten the lengths with some form of reducing profile towards the neck/mouth to maintain the required case volumes and also to achieve the required diameter at the mouth to hold the bullet.

A few, such as the European 7x72R and the 6.5x58R Sauer had a continuous taper, but the most successful form was the ubiquitous bottle-necked shape we are familiar with today as in the .30-06 Springfield, the .308 Winchester and numerous others.

The head-space and a reference point: An important consideration in designing a cartridge case is the choice of a suitable reference point to control the seating depth of the cartridge in the chamber. This is to ensure the breechblock or bolt face will lie correctly against the rear face of the cartridge and that the bullet will be precisely positioned at the entrance into the bore. The precision necessary for the fit of the cartridge in the chamber and the alignment of the bullet cannot be overemphasised. It is one of the cardinal goals in achieving accuracy and a lot depends on the choice of the reference point and its precision.

HOWEVER, IN THE engineering world, no dimension figures are absolute. Some small tolerance has to be allowed. The accepted tolerance and measurement of this is called the headspace. All calibres have published headspace specifications and most gunsmiths are able to measure this. The designer of the cartridge has several options when choosing a reference



point. The earliest metallic cartridges had a rim at the base as in the .303 British and most revolver cartridges today. But rimmed cartridges have their disadvantages. Although used successfully in some machine-guns, they do not lend themselves readily to this and they are also unsatisfactory in controlled-feed systems like the Mauser bolt-action.

RIMLESS CASES solved this problem in having a rebated groove at the base instead of a protruding rim. This allows the extractor claw to grasp the cartridge throughout the feed and extraction cycle. In this event, the reference is taken from the tapered shoulder of the bottleneck near the front of the cartridge. Being nearer to the bullet, and if the angle is steep, for example, thirty degrees in the 6mm PPC, an excellent and consistent reference can be achieved. But like the flanged

cartridge, the rimless design also has its disadvantages.

Cartridges with a slight shoulder angle or short taper section may offer a less precise reference point. The 9mmP pistol cartridge has no shoulder at all. So in this case the reference is taken from the edge of the mouth of the case.

SOME LARGE rimless cartridges have a raised section known as a belt which is situated just forward of the extractor groove. The belt is slightly larger than the diameter of the base. In this instance the reference is taken from the forward face of the belt. Designers chose the belt system when the slope or size of the shoulder of the cartridge is considered inadequate for a reference point.

In considering these options, a reference taken from a steep-shouldered, bottle-shaped cartridge case is

perhaps the best scheme because of the references' proximity to the bullet and it is here where precision is most needed.

BACK TO THE opening debate on accuracy; excluding the choice of bullets and propellants, it is surprising that there are just two parameters in the design of a cartridge case that will influence its potential for shooting accuracy. The first is the ability of the cartridge case to consistently seat bullets with perfect depth and concentricity at the lead into the bore, and the shape and dimensions of the combustion section to achieve a consistent and correct burning pattern of the propellant. Nonetheless, shooters will still have preferences and wildcat designs will continue to be developed, all in the endless pursuit of excellence. That is one of the pleasures of shooting. [M]



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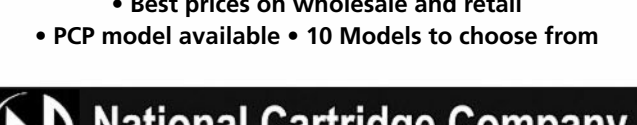
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Stormin' Norman

by **KOBUS DE KOCK** illustration **FRED MOUTON**

THE MANNE CAMPED on the banks of the Limpopo river, in the deep North West *bosveld*, where the ticks are still ticks, and dangerous at that. Tiny little pepper buggers that are hard to see and the bites only start itching after a couple of days and keep on itching for weeks. The men were there to hunt, but the impala were wary and scarce and after several days of walking many miles through rooibos and mopane they had not a scrap of meat to show for their efforts.

Oupa Norman had grown tired of this nonsense of walking all day and bagging nothing. His feet were killing him where his boots pinched his bunions. With the camp so invitingly cool under the *jakkalsbessies* and *huilboerbone* he decided to take a day off, put his feet up, read a book and listen to the many birds in this riverine paradise. There was some derisive but good natured banter when Oupa declared his intentions, but he wasn't fazed.

Next morning, on hearing the *manne* getting ready, he turned on his creaking camp bed, pulled the blanket up against the early morning chill and dozed off again.

He awoke when the sun filtered through the leafy trees to paint a dappled pattern on the canvas roof of the tent. The campfire coals had kept the water in the kettle hot enough to make a steaming mug of strong black coffee which he took to his camp chair and settled in comfortably. This was the life! Smoke from the mopane wood fire twirled straight up through the canopy of leaves. Glossy starlings and the resident yellow-billed hornbill hopped around the clean-swept earth in search of crumbs. He loved the smells: dust and wood-smoke and coffee; the left-over *mieliepap* they'd scooped into the tree-fork for the barbets; even the canvas of his old chair.

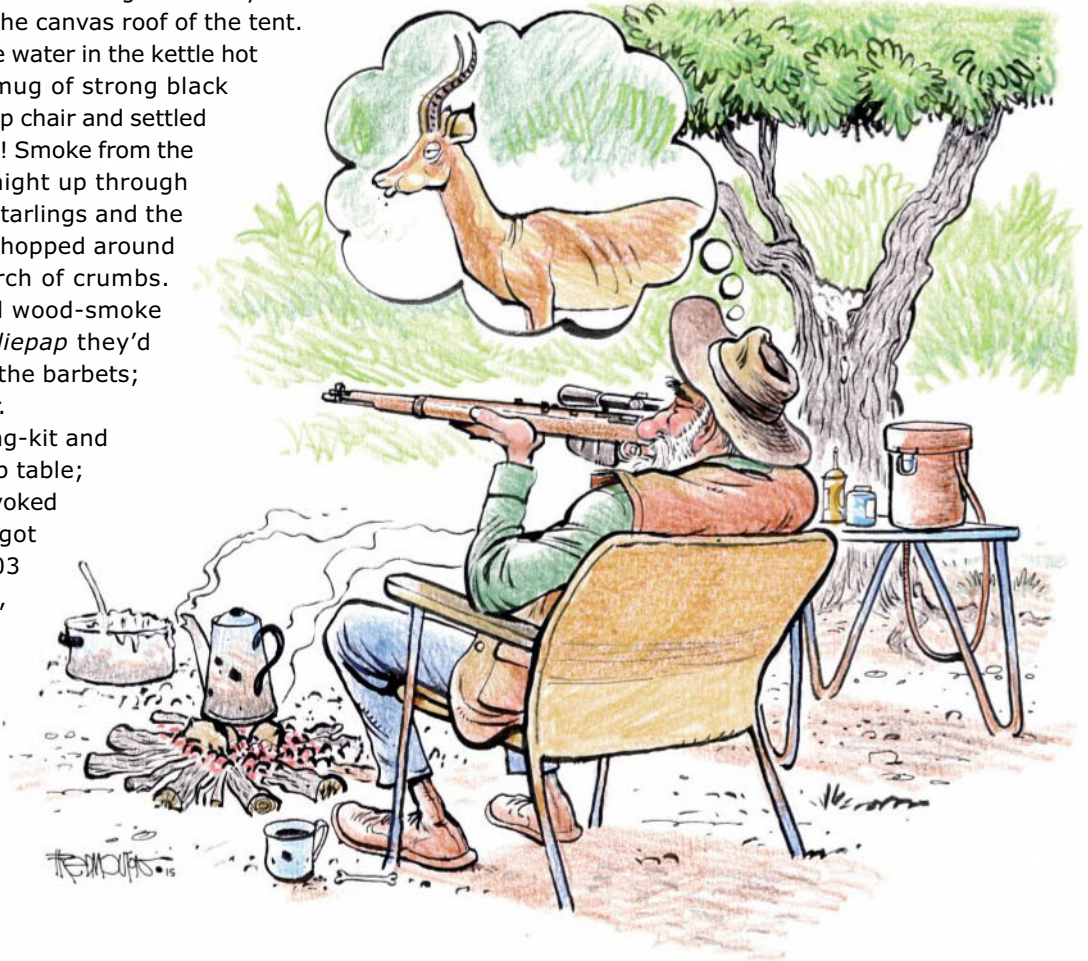
Someone had left a cleaning-kit and oil-soaked *lappies* on the camp table; the pungent smell of gun-oil evoked such nostalgia in him that he got up and fetched his ancient .303 from the tent. Heaven knows, he'd carried this old rifle far enough these past three dusty days, it deserved a cleaning.

Back in his chair, Oupa withdrew the bolt for removal, when his eyes were drawn to a russet patch behind a *rosyntjebos* just outside the camp's perimeter. He slowly raised the rifle and

peered through the scope. *So waar!* A lone impala ram had sauntered almost right into camp and was daintily picking up fallen leaves from the *rosyntjebos*, oblivious of his presence. Oupa hand-fed a cartridge into the chamber and quietly closed the bolt. Settling back in his chair, he took aim with his elbows resting on the arm rests.

Now, shooting from camp, or even close to camp, was strictly against hunting rules, but Oupa considered this an emergency in that, after so many days of hard hunting, they were still without even a slice of biltong. He was sure the *dominee* would forgive him and the Lord would understand. After all, Sunday was still two days away. And when the ox is in the pit...

The impala was no more than 40 yards away but largely obscured by bush. Then the ram lifted its head and a patch of its chest became visible through a small opening. Oupa took careful aim and threaded the shot through the gap without rustling a leaf; the ram dropped dead in its tracks. The trees exploded with sound and motion as hundreds of wings beat the air and monkeys leapt in desperate flight.



Oupa could not help feeling smug as he hauled the ram to the slaughter tree and starting gutting his prize. Just past *knypkop* stage, the young ram was a good *biltongbok*. Setting the liver and kidneys aside he dropped the rest of the innards in the camp wheelbarrow and wheeled it out to a distant antbear hole for the jackals to claim. He recovered his soft-nosed bullet from the far shoulder and to his surprise it had mushroomed back on itself to form an almost perfect sphere.

When Oupa returned from washing his hands in the river, the monkeys were back, and he reached for his catapult which he always brought along to keep these pests out of the camp. The deformed bullet would make the perfect *kettie* projectile. Reading his body language, the monkeys fled up into the highest branches and hid behind the greenery. Straining to see them made his neck ache, and as he lowered his head to take a break, he spotted a flock of guineafowl feeding towards him along the riverine bush, scratching among the fallen sycamore figs. He immediately ducked behind the trunk of the *jakkalsbessie*. Oupa still felt the pang of humiliation when recalling his boyhood reputation as the worst *kettieskieter* in all of Transvaal. Now, if only the guineafowl would come into the clearing of the camp, and the monkeys did not give him away, he might be able to redeem himself...

Grasping the wooden prong of his self-made *rooirek-kettie* in his left hand, he gripped the balled rifle bullet within the fold of the *velletjie* between his right thumb and forefinger, then tested the tension of the rubber thongs which, true to tradition, he had cut from a red tractor tube. Tension mounted within him as the guineafowl strutted ever closer. Finally the foremost birds entered the clearing, suddenly bunching and squabbling, heads down as they discovered crumbs of dried maize porridge which the barbets had scratched out of the tree-fork when feeding. This distraction gave Oupa his chance to step out from behind the tree unseen and draw his *kettie*...

The explosion of wingbeats as a dozen or more startled guineafowl simultaneously take to the air at very close quarters, always comes as a shock. It took Oupa a moment to gather himself, and then, amid the billowing dust, he saw a guineafowl wildly flopping and flapping about on the ground. Frantically, he ran forward and seized it...

Later he would tell his companions that the bullet hit the rising bird in the chest, dropping it to the earth stone dead. They knew, however, that far more likely, a shot into the bunched flock as they pecked at the fallen *mieliepap*, had clipped the unfortunate bird's 'horn' atop its head, incapacitating it, and Oupa had been lucky to catch the flopping bird before it recovered.

BUT, BE THAT as it may, Oupa had his guineafowl – the first bird of any kind he'd ever shot with a *kettie*. He drew the bird and hung it in the tree next to the *rooibok*. On the way to the *erdvarkgat* to drop this new bunch of innards down the hole, it occurred to him that Africa's ubiquitous catfish, the barbel, dearly loves chicken liver and gizzards, and here he was, camped on the bank of the great Limpopo! He did an abrupt about turn, smiling as he lovingly cradled the intestines in his upturned hand. A spot of fishing would do him good after all this activity – after all, he was in camp to take a break!

Returning to his chair, he was surprised to find that the monkeys had missed his *karringmelkbeskuit* which he'd left next to his coffee mug. Perhaps this was his lucky day, what with a guineafowl and an impala ram without setting foot outside of camp! Pleased, he brewed a fresh cup of coffee in which to dunk his beloved buttermilk rusks.

Later, he pocketed a spool of 30lb fishing-line that he always carried in his camping *trommel*, along with a size 6/0 Mustad hook. This being a hunting trip, he'd brought no rod, so he'd have to fish with a hand-line. With his guineafowl guts in one hand and an ice cold beer in the other, Oupa ambled down to the river.

In midwinter, the Limpopo is mostly a series of pools feebly connected by a trickle of water. The camp overlooked one of the bigger pools as it was usually the last to dry up. Eyed suspiciously by a random gathering of saddle-billed storks, herons and hamerkoppe, Oupa spooled off an appropriate length of line, then transfixed the fat clump of guineafowl guts on the big hook, thinking, "As the saying goes: big bait, big fish". He threw the baited hook out into the pool and settled down comfortably on a sandbar to relax.

He had drunk less than half his beer when he had to make a hurried grab for the line and hang on for dear life. The fish immediately made a determined run for the far side of the pool leaving Oupa trying to stop the run with his bare hands. Irritated now, at how his day of rest was turning out, Oupa decided to hell with sport, he was going to land that mother as quickly as possible and get back to his beer. The fight was fierce but short. He wrapped the line around his hand, turned around and, using his shoulder as a brace, tried to simply walk the fish out of the pool. But the barbel made another determined run, almost taking Oupa's little finger off.

Oupa finally landed the monster, which he estimated to weigh about 10kg. He gutted it, then hauled it up to the camp where he hung it in the shade next to the impala and the guineafowl. Gazing up at it, he adjusted his estimate to 12kg. Later, when he told the story to his grandchildren, its weight had reached 17kg.

By this time Oupa was exhausted but smugly content. Around noon, the other hunters started straggling dejectedly into camp, thirst and hunger having ended yet another fruitless morning in the bush. They found Oupa freshly showered and relaxing in his chair with a book, feet up, sipping a cold beer.

"So, what has our camp guard been up to?" asked one.

Straight-faced and without looking up from his book, Oupa said, "Oh, not much – got in a quick Macnab," and casually waved his hand toward the slaughter tree. 

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■ New Norma cases for 7x64 and .375H&H; new auto annealing machines to extend life of your brass cases. 082-901-0465 (017).

■ 2x new boxes Hornady brass for .257 Weatherby Magnum. Offers? Peter 082-456-6390 (011).

■ RCBS 304 scale and press, Lee press, reloading manual, .303 and 9mm Short die set, R3500. Hennie 012-329-0625.

■ Musgrave .30-06 K98, Thor trigger, 4-12x40 Nikon, Lynx mounts, with die set, R9500. 084-259-2593 (035).

■ Book: *The Modern Shotgun* by Major Gerald Burrard, 1931, Volume I & II, R1400 including p&p. Richard White 00267- 7242464, rhwhite@botsnet.bw

■ .30-06 Mauser rifle, with Swarovski optic, Habbicht 2.2-9x42 Nova telescope, swivel mounting, excellent condition, R35,000. Sonja 083-676-1863 (011).

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■ .416 Remington, custom built; Sabi rifles, Grade 5 walnut stock, swing-off mounts, Kahles scope, Mauser action. Ruan 084-393-8803 (013).

■ Kahles Helia-S 1.1-4.5x20 rifle scope, 30mm steel tube, supreme quality, mint condition, R9900. Ben 082-937-8137 (021).

■ .375H&H Dumoulin geweer, Swarovski 3x12 teleskoop, swing-off mounts, Timney sneller, prag geweer, R29,950. Frans 082-491-6997 (012).

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Klarus XT12 Flashlight



The Klarus XT12 flashlight with the self-locating magnetic fast connection charging system. The recharge cable uses a standard USB port for charging at home, in the office or vehicle, or anywhere a USB charging port is available. Right: The dual switch at the back of the flashlight.



THE KLARUS XT12 is a compact flashlight with a maximum light output of 930 lumens. Operation is simple: only two buttons are used. The main button switches it on at its brightest setting, and off. Next to the primary switch is the mode-switch, which is a small flat metal plate. This plate button is used to switch to two other light settings. When the flashlight is on, pushing down on the plate switches it to a medium strength beam of 140 lumens and a second click switches the flashlight to a low light setting of 2 lumens.

The low light setting is for close work such as map reading. The medium setting is bright enough for normal indoor night conditions or for lighting your path to the long-drop. The brightest setting delivers a solid beam out to 100m or more. It enabled me to see my whole backyard, an area of 30m by 15m, without moving the beam laterally.

When the flashlight is off, pressing the secondary plate and holding it down will give you a strobe-light at the full-powered 930 lumens. Hold it down for longer than two seconds and it stays in strobe until the switch is pressed again. The strobe can be used to draw



attention to your position in an emergency, or to disorientate a close attacker, allowing you time to escape or to take charge of the situation.

The XT12 is 163mm long, with a 25.6mm wide body and 35mm head. It weighs 152gr without the battery. It has a detachable stainless steel striking bezel that can be changed with others of various lengths or colour filters.

It has a threaded receiver for attachment to a camera tripod or other accessory. It uses an 18650 rechargeable battery. The XT12's 'self-locating magnetic' charging system rather sets it apart. The charging cable's contact

end has a magnet which 'snaps' on to the torch's charging port (also magnetic) the moment the two surfaces are held near each other. The charging cable fits a standard USB port and will charge the battery while you're driving, using the same port for

a cell phone charger or when you're using your laptop or computer. Battery run time is indicated as 3.4 hours at max lumens, 10 hours at 140 lumens and 178 hours at 2 lumens. The torch comes with a belt-carry pouch, a lanyard, USB charging cable, rechargeable battery, two spare o-rings and a spare rubber cap for the buttons.

This flashlight is ideal for emergency medical personnel, police and security work, farmers, hunters, campers and more. The Klarus XT12 retails for R1 350. Contact David Le Roux on 071-613-6777 for sales or visit www.klaruslight.co.za. 

The grip-ring on the flashlight works well for one-handed use of the torch. This gives a secure hold on the flashlight when your other hand is in use.

◀ **continued from page 58**

It was almost certainly a Holland & Holland, Rigby or Westley Richards. Calibre would be .470 or similar. Maybe even a .500. Knowing Laurie, I would expect the .500 was possibly his choice; he never did anything by halves.

His marriage appears to have ended when he was in his sixties and it left the family very much divided. In 1965 I met Laurie when I was in the British South Africa Police at Fort Rixon. He was mining the old dumps of long abandoned gold mines. He had a new wife and family, of which Annie was one of four children.

He died in 1984 at the age of 87, while mining for gold in the Filabusi district. In retrospect, I do not need a detailed blow-by-blow account of his wanderings and hunting. I can see him now; with his huge double resting on the stump of his left arm facing a charging elephant, lion, buffalo or leopard. Some things don't have to be recorded and survive better in the imagination. – **Chris Pargeter**



Rudolph Scopes

RUDOLPH OPTICS have launched two new rifle scopes, the Varmint Hunter 6-24x50mm (R9 950) and the T1 6-24x50mm (R11 950) for 'veldskiet' applications. These scopes are for long range shooting. The VH 6-24x50mm has a 30mm tube with a second rear focal plane reticle. It is water, fog and shock-proof. It features capped pop-up turrets for easy adjustments and a side focus parallax adjustment knob. We plan to supply more information in a test report soon. Readers can contact Rudolph Optics on 021- 887-3700, email: info@rudolphoptics.com.

– **André Grobler**

Stiletto Snakes

WHILE IN THE Congo an expatriate found a smallish black snake in his empty swimming pool. He removed it from the pool with a net and picked it up in his hand wearing an industrial rubber glove. The snake immediately bit him on a finger with one fang penetrating. He felt immediate and severe pain and was taken to a clinic where he became nauseous, complained of unbearable pain and soon afterwards died.

The snake responsible was one of the Stiletto snakes, previously known as Burrowing asps or Mole vipers and in the genus *Atractaspis*. There are about 15 *Atractaspis*

**Original Oberndorf
Mauser .22s
are a treat. This
month we revisit
these fine guns in
our bonus article.
Scan the code.**



Digging for History

A FRIEND recently bought a metal detector and during a break from work we went hunting for historical objects. Beforehand I did some research and found an interesting historical site about 20km from Port Elizabeth.

We slowly worked our way over fynbos covered hills, using the metal detector. Every time the machine buzzed our excitement rose as we started to dig; never knowing what old object would be revealed after being buried for decades, even centuries. Laying out all the treasures found, we realised they represented fragments in the history of firearms. From the time muzzle-loaders were used to the first centre-fire cartridge guns.

In the photograph, from the left, are two round lead bullets from the

muzzle-loading era, then four .22 cases. Next are four pinfire cases followed by the brass heads of 12-bore shotgun cartridges. These are followed by the remnants of three coiled brass Snider rounds, an unfired Martini-Henry cartridge, a Martini case and lastly two old .303 cases. The .22 case

lying at the top is fatter than the others and I have no answer for this.

Featured here are items only of interest to *Magnum* readers, but our treasure trove also included many other bits and pieces of history – some of iron, some of brass or copper and even gold. – **Robin Barks**





Bibron's Stiletto Snake
(*Atractaspis bibronii*).

species in Africa with the Bibron's Stiletto (*Atractaspis bibronii*) the one mostly found in South Africa.

Stiletto snakes are secretive, nocturnal and quite small; around 30-50cm in length. In exceptional cases the Bibron's Stiletto may exceed 80cm in length. They spend most of their time underground where they prey on other snakes, lizards, small rodents and reptile eggs. On hot summer nights, especially after good rain, they surface and this puts them in contact with people. Victims are mostly rural dwellers who unknowingly step on them, and people handling them.

These snakes have large fangs and are capable of letting a fang protrude beyond the jaw, allowing it to use the fang in a stabbing fashion. It is also one of the few snakes that cannot be held safely. If gripped behind the neck, the snake protrudes a fang and twists its head, enabling the fang to pierce a finger. Some snake handlers are bitten two or three times before they can get rid of the snake.

Many people, including experienced snake handlers, often confuse the Stiletto snakes with harmless species such as the Black File snake, the Cape Wolf snake or Mole snake. It is best to avoid any snake that fits the general description of a Stiletto snake.

Stiletto venom is potentially *cytotoxic* and causes immediate pain and swelling. As the swelling spreads blisters may form and this invariably results in some tissue damage. A bite on a finger is particularly bad as the local tissue damage often results in a finger or part of it being amputated. To date we have not had any fatal bites in South Africa, but elsewhere in Africa fatalities have been recorded. There is no antivenom for this snake. Other than pain killers and keeping the bitten area slightly elevated and clean, very little can be done. In their scientific paper *Observations on the bite of the Southern Burrowing Asp (Atractaspis bibronii) in Natal* (1989) Dr Colin Tilbury and Prof Branch state that early surgical intervention was seldom advised. It is usually about a week after the bite that the damage done by the venom can be assessed and treatment administered to the affected area. – **Johan Marais** 

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